University of Alberta

Islam and Arabism in Zanzibar: The Omani Elite, the Arab World and the Making of an Identity, 1880s-1930s

by

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They did not ask: what is beyond death?
They remembered the map of Paradise more than the book of Earth, occupied with another question: what shall we do before this death..?
Our lives are a burden on the night of the historian: "Every time I hide them, they reappear to me out of the sunset ..."
They organized their dreams in a different way. And they slept standing up!

Maḥmūd Darwīsh. *Lā ta'tadhir 'ammā fa'alt.*

In memory of my father Nadim Ghazal and my grandfather 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Majzoub,
In memory of their legacy that has been a fountain of inspiration,
In memory of their beliefs and hopes, courage and defiance,
In memory of their shattered dreams,
I dedicate a dream that came true...

Abstract

At the juncture of Arab and African histories lies the legacy of al-Busa'īdī rule in Zanzibar. This dissertation aims at resurrecting aspects of that legacy, as they related to the politics of identity of the Omani elite in a time framework set between 1880s and 1930s. Relying on archival and primary material, and supported by a wide range of secondary literature, I situate the politics of identity of the Omani elite in Zanzibar within the context of pan-Ibadism, pan-Islamism, pan-Arabism and Islamic reform. I highlight the commonality of the colonial experience that bonded Ibadis with each other and Ibadis with Sunni reformers and I argue that the ties built between the Omani elite and intellectual and political movements in the Arab world were a form of an ideological resistance to colonialism. The methodology employed in this work is defined by a 'globalist' perspective that transcends colonial and disciplinary boundaries and relies on 'global' dynamics that connected Muslim societies together and allowed for the definition of a collective Muslim identity. I reconstruct the relationship between Oman and Zanzibar in terms of historical continuity and highlight the Zanzibari factor in the Omani *nahḍa* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I then link that *nahḍa* to broader developments in the Arab world. This is followed by an analysis of pan-Ibadism that created a political and intellectual alliance among Ibadis in Zanzibar, Oman and Algeria. I underline the role of the Omani in fostering pan-Ibadism and developing a neo-Ibadi movement seeking alliance with the Ottoman court and rapprochement with Sunni reformers in the Mashriq. The thought and achievements of an individual intellectual in Zanzibar, Nāṣir al-Bahlānī, reveal the close ties between Ibadi intellectuals in Zanzibar and the general developments in

modern Arab and Islamic thought. This holistic approach that emphasizes interregional links shows the degree to which Islam remained a marker of a collective identity during the interwar period, including the identity of Omanis in Zanzibar. This study, in sum, integrates the modern intellectual history of Ibadism into the modern Arab and Islamic history and bridges African history with the Arab one.

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Chapter I
Arabs in Zanzibar: Revisiting History

Introduction

> No region in the world has as deep and organic connection to history as Central Asia and East Africa have (except perhaps for the Middle East). Each of their events, big or small, is related to it [history]. Each of their stones, if tossed, has a tale. Each face, if addressed, tells a legend. Even the winds that carried trade to them [to Central Asia and East Africa] brought history along. It is impossible to write about East Africa today if you do not know how to step back into the past. It is inevitable for a visiting Arab writer but to swim in two seas [sic]: the sea of Arabs and the sea of Islam.[1]

Those are the words of Riyāḍ al-Rayyis, an Arab journalist who visited Zanzibar in 1997. The word 'Zanzibar' evoked for him memories of the Arab glory lost in the cities of medieval Iberian Andalusia; he hoped that a similar past -- if less majestic -- would reveal itself on the coasts of Zanzibar. In his eyes, Zanzibar was indeed another Andalusia, one Arabs had lost in Africa.[2]

To chart the Arab-Islamic identity of Zanzibar is to go on a journey extending back centuries. More particularly it is to pause in the last two centuries, when Zanzibar was the capital of the al-Busa'īdī Arab-Muslim dynasty. The prosperous trade terminus, the vibrant cultural center, the magnet for merchants, diplomats, adventurers, ulama and fortune seekers was, in addition to all of the above, an entrepôt for ideas and a significant hotbed of Arab-Islamic intellectualism. Such a place was surely to bear many legacies, some buried and forgotten, some overshadowed by new ones. The Arab-Muslim legacy of Zanzibar is one of those legacies that is yet to be

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[1] Riyāḍ Najīb al-Rayyis, *Ṣaḥāfī wa madinatayn: riḥla ila samarqand wa zanjubār.* (A Journalist and Two Cities: A Journey to Samarqand and Zanzibar) (Beirut: Riyāḍ al-Rayyis Books, 1997), 13.

[2] Al-Rayyis was moved by the Swahili *ṭarab*, which, for the ears of an Arab like him, was nothing but an Arab *ṭarab*. This music and the Zanzibari 'Um Kulthūm' performing and singing in both Arabic and Swahili woke in him, as he said, "his historical senses and moved in him nostalgic sentiments. He almost forgot that he was half the globe away from Beirut..." Upon leaving this performance, he felt inside him "a strong bitterness for an Arab Andalusia that Arabs lost in Africa." Ibid., 192-193.

fully disclosed. Only part of the tale of its Islamic heritage has been told;[3] only little of its distinct Arabic character molding the unique *ustu'rabu* phenomenon[4] has been explored.

This dissertation attempts to shed more light on that heritage and that character as they were manifest under al-Busa'īdīs and as they were shaped by the Omani elite. The role of that elite is revealed by transcending the colonial and disciplinary boundaries that framed the elite within a defined geography and a narrow history, and as such, imposed or restricted the parameters of its identity. This identity, I argue, was neither subject to British rules, regulations and racial classification nor to territorial frontiers. It rather depended on elements rooted deep in history and shared by a world with which the Omani elite associated. Theirs was an Arab-Muslim identity molded by the Islamic religion, the Ibadi sect, the Arabic language and all the history that bore the legacy of that language and that religion. They comprise what Chatterjee calls the spiritual 'inner' domain bearing the 'essential' marks of identity, which nationalism -- in this case Arab-Muslim nationalism-- declares "its sovereign territory."[5] "[It] refuses to allow the colonial power to intervene in that domain",[6] he adds. Colonial powers

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[3] Islam has been a major criterion in defining the Swahili. As Middleton notes, it "marked them off from most of their neighbors and those of the interior, from their former European rulers, and from the present rulers of Kenya and Tanzania..." John Middleton, *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 2. James De Vere Allen, to the contrary, does not include Islam in the definition of Swahili although he acknowledges its crucial role in what he calls the 'Swahilization'. He argues that the centrality of Islam has decreased since the early nineteenth century with the flow of non-Muslim new comers to the East African coast. See James De Vere Allen, *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon* (London: James Currey, 1993), 15-16.

[4] *Ustu'rabu* (Arabization) meant to be civilized like an Arab. The term itself and the phenomenon have long existed on the coast of East Africa but became more accentuated and widely spread under the Omani rule. See Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), 42-43.

[5] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6.

[6] Ibid.

were not only refused entry but were confronted and challenged by that collective identity. To analyze the dynamics of that identity within an anti-colonial setting I adopt an approach that examines the colonized/colonizer encounter from a 'globalist' perspective. This approach looks at the period between the 1880s and 1930s as the era of modern globalization, when ideas, acts, and people became interconnected in an unprecedented fashion. Islam maintained both values and structures that allowed it to aptly function within this ambiance of globalization and to face up to the challenge by revivifying its own inner dynamics. Scholarly networks, common religious values, pan-Islamism as embodied in the concept of the Muslim *umma*, and Islamic reformism characterized the globalist makeup of Islam. The Arab world was central in fashioning those dynamics and the Omani elite in Zanzibar was well-positioned to respond to them. It is this interconnectedness with the Arab world, especially Oman, Algeria and the Mashriq (the Arab East), and the ideas, networks and intellectual and political movements it generated that shaped the Arab-Muslim identity of the ruling elite in Zanzibar. Zanzibar, with its deep historical connections to the Arab world and with its distinctly strong Arab-Islamic character (at least during the period covered in this work) sharply defining the Swahili civilization, allowed the articulation of that identity. However, before contextualizing this identity and elaborating on the global dynamics that shaped it, it is essential to examine the disciplinary boundaries and methodological shortcomings that have positioned the elite on the margins of the historical discipline. Redrawing the borders of Arab history and African history is the first step in reconsidering that marginality.

De-parochializing Disciplines and Geography[7]

Arab history is not confined to Arab 'nation-states' and is not a monopoly delineated by their past or present boundaries. Arab history is as elastic as Arab geography. Its definition is as resilient as that of the 'Arab world'[8] marked not by boundaries and frontiers but by a borderless identity, that al-Rayyis located in end-of-twentieth century Zanzibar. That identity marks its limits in moving sands and seafaring waves. It builds its foundations on a common language and religion and draws on shared memories and cherished pasts that contract and expand geography in order to accommodate history.[9] It borrows from reality and imagination, memory and desire but continues to wrap itself in the robe of the Arabic language and the garb of

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[7] Engseng Ho uses the term 'parochialization' to refer to "the imprint of colonial history, and of colonial categories which still organize its historiography" in his study on Arabs in the British and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia. This, as he observed, occurred at a number of levels, from defining a political geography that later became a 'national' geography, to dividing time into specific historical periods to, most significantly, creating racial categories out of multi-ethnic conglomerates. See Engseng Ho, "Before Parochialization: Diasporic Arabs Cast in Creole Waters," Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein, eds. *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 11-35.

[8] As Adeed Dawisha indicates, the concept of an Arab world is "a cultural rather than a political construct, and consequently, there has been considerable shift over time in the conceptual delineation of the land mass inhabited by 'Arabs'." Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 14. However, Dawisha's own geographic definition of the 'Arab world' does not include Arabs in East Africa or even those beyond the southern frontiers of North Africa.

[9] The impact of those three elements on defining an Arab-Muslim identity is best captured by Albert Hourani in his prologue to his seminal work *A History of the Arab Peoples,* a prologue centered around the career of 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn. While everything in the latter's career reflected "the frailty of human endeavour, something seemed to be stable. A world where a family from southern Arabia could move to Spain, and after six centuries return nearer to its place of origin and still find itself in familiar surroundings, had a unity which transcended divisions of time and space; the Arabic language could open the door to office and influence throughout that world; a body of knowledge, transmitted over the centuries by a known chain of teachers, preserved a moral community even when rulers changed; places of pilgrimage, Mecca and Jerusalem, were unchanging poles of the human world even if power shifted from one city to another; and belief in a God who created and sustained the world could give meaning to the blows of fate." Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber & Faber, 1991), 4.

Islam.[10] It is this definition of Arab history that qualifies members of the Omani elite in Zanzibar --as speakers of Arabic, followers of Islam, and bearers of common history and beliefs with much of the Arab world-- to be identified as both subjects and agents of Arab history. So far, their role has not been recognized as such and they have been cast outside the field of Arab and Middle Eastern studies.[11] The fact that the country of origin of this elite, Oman, is in itself a peripheral area --not only in terms of geography but also in terms of politics and intellectualism shaping or influencing Arab history-- has further contributed to its marginality.[12]

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[10] The Arabic language has always been the basis for defining an Arab identity. A thorough analysis of the relationship between the Arabic language and Arab identity can be found in Yasir Suleiman, *The Arabic Language and National Identity: A Study in Ideology* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2003). However, ideologues of Arab nationalism (and therefore Arab identity) were split on the role of Islam in the definition of an Arab identity although they all acknowledged its contribution to Arab civilization. The secular version of Arab nationalism, as formulated by someone like Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī for example, did not accommodate Islam but rather considered it problematic in defining the national identity of Arabs. See William L. Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist: Ottomanism and Arabism in the Life and Thought of Sati' al-Husri* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971). However, Arab identity as promoted by Islamists considered Islam as its backbone. This was expressed by Muslim reformers such as Muḥammad 'Abduh, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī, Rashīd Ridā, Shakīb Arslān and Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb. The Arab-Muslim identity and the version of Arab nationalism examined in this thesis is the one that reckoned on both language and religion as propagated not by secular ideologues such as al-Ḥuṣrī but rather by those religious reformers mentioned above. See, for instance, William L. Cleveland, *Islam against the West: Shakib Arslan and the Campaign for Islamic Nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), Ernest C. Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, eds., Rashid Khalidi et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 3-30, Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) especially pp. 90-96, and Amal N. Ghazal, "Power, Arabism and Islam in the Writings of Muhib al-Din al-Khatib in *al-Fath*," *Past Imperfect* 6(1997): 133-150.

[11] Hourani, for example, chronicles the history of Arabs from the rise of Islam until modern time but completely dismisses the history of Arabs beyond the Maghrib-Mashriq paradigm. See Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*. Moreover, the discussion of marginality in Middle Eastern studies, for example, has not taken into account marginality of geography but rather social marginality in Foucauldian terms. See Eugene Rogan, ed. *Outside In: On the Margins of the Modern Middle East* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2002).

[12] Studies on the history of Oman are minimal if compared to studies on other regions of the Arab world, especially Egypt and the Fertile Crescent. However, there is relatively a more significant body of literature on the history of Oman since the 1970's, at the aftermath of its modernization process undertaken under the present Sultan Qābūs bin Sa'īd and its membership in oil-producing countries. A similar marginality is found in the case of North African Ibadis who inhabit areas of no significant interest for researchers such as the Mizab valley in Algeria, the Nfusa Mountains in Libya and Jirba Island in Tunisia.

This marginality of the Omani elite in Zanzibar is not confined to Arab/Middle Eastern studies alone but is also characteristic of Islamic studies. It is a Muslim elite but most of its members belong to a sect to which Islamicists have devoted little attention. Ibadism; the third sect of Islam, and an offshoot of one of its most notorious movements, *al-khawārij*, has generated limited interest among researchers. The scant literature available on Ibadism is unevenly distributed between that devoted to its early history and that of its modern one.[13] Although Ibadi communities are found almost exclusively in the Arab world, they rarely feature as contributors, or even participants, in modern Arab-Islamic history.[14] Thus, there is a 'double marginalization' occurring in the case of Ibadis – due to sectarian affiliation and to geographic location.

This chapter in the history of Zanzibar, however, is as much part of African history as it is of the Arab one. These two fields are complementary and overlapping though they are often treated as being dichotomous.[15] While the definition of 'Arab'

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[13] European travelers and officials in North Africa were among the first to produce a relatively significant body of literature about the Ibadi communities they came across. Prominent among them was the work of Emile Masqueray, *Chronique d'Abou Zakaria* (Alger, 1878). Few academics devoted their careers to the study of Ibadism, one of them being the Polish historian T. Lewicki who published around 23 monographs and articles on Ibadism between the 1930s and 1970s. A list of his publications can be found in T. Lewicki, *Al-Mu'arrikhūn al-ibadiyyūn fi afriqiyya al-sahamāliyya*, trans. Maher Jarrar and Rima Jarrar (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2000). A thorough study on Ibadism in North Africa in the early period was conducted by Elizabeth Savage, *A Gateway to Hell, A Gateway to Paradise: The North African Response to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1997).). J. C. Wilkinson published on Ibadis in Oman and his study on the imamate tradition in Oman remains the most useful and most comprehensive. See idem, *The Imamate Tradition in Oman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). A most recent sketch of Ibadism and aspects of its modern religious discourse in Oman and Zanzibar is presented by Valerie Hoffman. Idem, "The Articulation of Ibādī Identity in Modern Oman and Zanzibar," *The Muslim World* 94(2004): 201-216.

[14] For example, Ali Merad, in his seminal work on the Islamic reform movement in Algeria between 1925 and 1940, devotes no more than three pages on the role Ibadis played in that movement. See idem, *Le reformisme musluman en Algèrie de 1925 à 1940: essai d'histoire religieuse et sociale* (Paris: Mouton et Co., 1967), 222-225. Muḥammad 'Ali Dabbūz, on the other hand, makes the strong case for a more rigorous role of Ibadis in the modern history of Algeria, especially their role in the reform anti-colonial movement. See Muḥammad 'Ali Dabbūz, *Nahḍat al-jazā'ir al-ḥadūtha wa thawratuha al-mubāraka* (Algeria: al-Maṭba'a al-Ta'āwuniyya, 1965).

[15] A similar notion of the conformity between Arab and African history is expressed by Alamin M. Mazrui and Ibrahim Noor Shariff, *The Swahili: Idiom and Identity of an African People* (Trenton:

tends to defy geography, that of an 'African' is often made to manipulate geography, insulating itself within borders, rigidly marked by the demarcations of a specific color, race, tribe, religion, or language. Arabs and Islam, along the lines of that definition, do not belong within those borders but outside them and do not fit the categories of 'African' races and religions. They tend to be rejected as part of the African heritage.[16] It is for this reason that 'Arab' North Africa and often the Sahara, are carved out of 'African' history with the assumption that they represent and therefore belong to another category of history.[17] As a result, several communities born out of this conjuncture of histories remain marginalized within the field of African history. This has been the case with the Arab ruling elite in Zanzibar.[18]

Arabs have inhabited the East African coast for centuries and have contributed to the birth and development of Swahili language, culture and society. The arrival of al-Busa'īdīs in the nineteenth century was but one more chapter in that continuous

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*A*frica World Press, 1994). In discussing the Swahili identity, for example, they consider its Arabocentric paradigm as "merely a subset of the Afrocentric paradigm." Ibid., 9.

[16] Not every Africanist, of course, shares this view. Ali al-Mazrui for example, in his documentary and book *The Triple Heritage of Africa,* highlights the integral role of Islam and Arabs in African history and argues for their essential part in the African 'heritage'. See idem, *The Triple Heritage of Africa.* His views, however, are not shared by all Africanists whose definition of African history is not as inclusive as Mazrui's. A different view and a different definition are implicitly invoked by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in idem, *Wonders of the African World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

[17] This abbreviated definition of African history and African geography is even reflected in the most recent and comprehensive study of Islam in Africa. While Egypt and North Africa are presented as 'gateways' to Africa, Africa itself is divided into West Africa and the Sudan, and Eastern and Southern Africa. See Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, eds., *The History of Islam in Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000).

[18] The same applies to the group identified as 'Swahili' who, for long, remained 'unrecognized' by academics as a category of Africans and were deemed unworthy of their attention. See the introduction to James de Vere Allen, *Swahili Origins*. The notion that the 'Swahili' is not pure 'African' on account of the different color, language, and intermixing with Arabs still persists today and has reappeared in the statement of Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in his controversial documentary *Wonders of the African World,* when he said the following: "It has taken my people 50 years to move from being Negro to being black, to being Afro-American. How long is it going to take the Swahili to become African?" Gates, Jr. *Wonders of the African World,* 152. Ali A. Mazrui criticized Gates for practicing a form of Orientalism, that the former called "Black Orientalism". Mazrui's initial response can be found at Ali A. Mazrui, A "Preliminary Critique of the TV Series by Henry Louis Gates, JR," *West Africa Review,* 1(2000). His second reply can be found at Ali A. Mazrui, "Black Orientalism: Further Reflections on 'Wonders of the African World,' " *West Africa Review* 1(2000).

interaction between Arabia and East Africa, a by-product of their deeply interwoven histories. Omani Arabs, like many Arabs who had been arriving on the coast became an integral part of the Swahili society; they defined it as much as it defined them, they were part of it as much as it was part of them. They bridged two worlds, two geographies and two histories.

Their arrival was soon followed by that of the British whose perspective on African history and societies, one that has shaped much Western historiography, was defined by the search, creation and imagination of 'indigenous' races and tribes. Geography and genealogy were the accepted parameters of an 'African' identity, and Arabs hailing from another geography and with different genealogies were considered neither 'indigenous' nor 'African'. For Western observers, the Swahili society was divided into two categories of people or 'races': the Swahili and the Arab. The Swahili was first declared racially impure, thus not 'African'. Some researchers asserted that the Swahili could possibly be 'African' but it all depended on how much "Swahilism" owed to Africa rather than to Arabia or the Middle East.[19] Identifying the Swahili in terms of Africanness or Arabness has been an exhaustive exercise and a recurrent topic that has dominated the field of East African history. Swahili history has become more about Swahili identity and less about Swahili society. Omani Arabs were lost in the muddle of the Swahili identity, and being defined as non-African, were kept outside the scope of academic interest, their membership in the Swahili society gone unrecognized.[20] Rather than being considered a patch in the mosaic of that society,

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[19] A good summary of the debates around the origins of the Swahili is found in Allen, *Swahili Origins*, 1-20.

[20] Middleton's notion that "some groups, such as the former Omani rulers and recent immigrants from Arabia, have clearly been considered members of Swahili society as soon as they have become socially

they have been treated as an anomaly. From that perspective, they have become the 'colonial' and the 'outsider'. They belong to the category of the 'invaders' of Africa.[21]

As a result of the 'revolution' in Zanzibar in 1964, aiming at putting an end to Arab rule on the island, few studies on the political history of Arabs in Zanzibar surfaced over the last four decades. They were written, again, for the purpose of asserting that anomaly in African history and to showcase the revolution as an 'African' one aimed against 'colonial' Arabs.[22]

However, it is not the issues raised around identity alone that have marginalized the Omani elite. Recent methodological development has further contributed to its exclusion. In line with prevalent currents in post-colonial studies in almost all fields, historians of Africa, as well as of the Middle East, have shifted focus from 'elites' to 'subalterns', on the premise that the elites' perspective on identity has been used exhaustively at the expense of that of the masses whose agency has been ignored and downplayed.[23] In the case of Zanzibar, the 'subalterns' were the slaves or

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and culturally incorporated" has not earned them a well-recognized place in his study. Throughout his book on the Swahili world, Middleton is more concerned about members of the Swahili society whom he labels 'the Swahili' rather than about all members of the society.

[21] The term is in reference to Reginald Coupland's *East Africa and its Invaders*, in which he argued that the coast of East Africa has been 'colonized' by immigrants from the Middle East. See idem, *East Africa and its Invaders* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1968).

[22] See Michael F. Lofchie, *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), Norman R. Bennett, *A History of the Arab State of Zanzibar* (London: Methuen & Co., 1978) and Abdul Sheriff and Ed Ferguson, eds., *Zanzibar under Colonial Rule* (London: James Currey, 1991). Bennett's view, however, is the most balanced from that perspective although the book itself did not go beyond a pure political analysis. Bennett refused Lofchie's judgment of the Arabs as an 'alien oligarchy' and considers the Arabs in Zanzibar as "much integral members of the local society as Africans whose families were of similar local ancestry. The Arabs of Zanzibar and Pemba were no more alien in their country than are the black American inhabitants of the United States: both groups differed in some ways from the more numerous elements of the population of their native lands, but both were citizens sharing equally most of the common characteristics of their nation's makeup." See Bennett, *A History of the Arab State in Zanzibar*, 252.

[23] As Cooper commented, African history is considered by many American and European scholars to be "subaltern studies by default". Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: rethinking Colonial African History," in *The American Historical Review* 99(1994): 1525. For the most recent works based on subaltern analysis on the East African coast, see Jonathan Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry,*

ex-slaves who, by the early twentieth century, constituted three-fourths of the island's population.[24] They have become the subject matter of the history 'from below' and that of 'everyday life'. This trend has made the possibility of redressing the imbalance even more unlikely.

This dissertation is the first attempt to examine this elite closely, an elite whose ranks were filled by Omanis and whose members were rulers, politicians, landlords, journalists and ulama, who represented a blend of wealth, power, authority and intellectualism. This was a self-perpetuating minority, albeit a dominant and influential one. Its constituents, in addition to other non-Omani Arabs and to the exclusion of Europeans, were the only literati of their society – at least until World War II. This Zanzibari intelligentsia, well-positioned at a nodal point in the Indian Ocean and in British imperial networks of communications, pulled Zanzibar into the larger Arab-Muslim world. Like other well-connected intelligentsias bordering the Indian Ocean, they were "more susceptible to international thinking,"[25] that, in turn, molded their collective identity.

Contextualizing 'Arab' Identity

Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast (London: James Currey, 1995), and Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*. In Middle Eastern Studies, see James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni, eds., *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), James Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000) and Israel Gershoni et al., eds., *Histories of the Modern Middle East: New Directions* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002).

[24] Burton, reporting in 1872, indicated that slaves constituted about three quarters of Zanzibar's population. See Richard Francis Burton, *Zanzibar: City, Island and Coast* (London: Tinsley Bros., 1872; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1967), 81. In 1895, slaves and ex-slaves accounted for 85 percent of the total African population on the island, including Pemba. See Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 30.

[25] See Mark Frost, "'Wider Opportunities': Religious Revival, Nationalist Awakening and the Global Dimension in Colombo, 1870-1920," *Modern Asian Studies* 36(2002), 939. This study analyzes the impact of colonialism on the development of a global Buddhist awakening.

It is within the parameters of that Arab-Muslim world that the Omani elite in Zanzibar largely shaped its identity. Identities have many variables and are elastic, malleable, situational and multi-layered.[26] They can be constructed and reconstructed and their variables range from occupation to gender, from class to language, from age to religion. This complexity and elasticity of identity, however, does not negate its significance. After all, identities do exist as points of collective social definitions and political reference. As Yasir Suleiman indicates:

> Being so wide-ranging in scope, it is not surprising that the concept of identity defies precise description. This fact should not however deter us from delving into those questions of collective affiliation which constitute the scope of identity, not least because of the persistence of this notion as an operative factor in all aspects of human life.[27]

Some factors, such as religion, language, and communal history,[28] have a more permanent and stronger impact on identity than others and this dissertation takes those

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[26] When a Zanzibari individual was asked why on one occasion he would identify himself as a Shirazi, claiming descent from the Persian city of Shiraz, and on another occasion as a Hadimu, an indigenous community, his answer was: "Before you were asking about politics, and for the purpose of politics I am Shirazi. Now you are asking about traditions and for that purpose I am Hadimu." Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 52. Rashid Khalidi, for example, in his study on Palestinian identity, concludes that there existed at the turn of the century a multiple foci of identity among the Palestinians (as was the case among other Arabs) and that they "identified with the Ottoman Empire, their religion, Arabism, their homeland Palestine, their city or region, and their family, without feeling any contradiction, or sense of conflicting loyalties." See Rahid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 19. The same argument can be found in idem, "The Formation of Palestinian Identity: The Critical Years, 1917-1923," in *Rethinking Nationalism*, 171-190.

[27] Yasir Suleiman, *The Arabic Language*, 5.

[28] Language, religion, and historical memories have been the main attributes for the sense of a communal belonging, often called ethnicity and ethnic community. See Anthony Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambrdige: Polity Press, 2000), 5. Smith defines the ethnic community or *ethnie* as "a named human population with myths of ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of shared culture, a link with a homeland, and a measure of solidarity, at least among the elites." Ibid., 65. What marks the difference between and *ethnie* and a nation, he continues, was the former' s emphasis on myths of ancestry and historical memories. Smith's definition was presented as a balance sheet between a perennialist and a modernist approaches to nationalism. One, however, has to be careful adopting this ethnic approach to understanding Arab identity in modern history since language and not ancestry has been the major framework of defining an Arab. In his analysis of George Antonius' *The Arab Awakening* --a work considered the bible of Arab nationalism—William Cleveland states that "Antonius regards language as

specific factors for granted as anchors of the Omani elite's identity. The prominence of each element may vary from time to time or from person to person but taken collectively they constitute the essentiality of collective identities. They form the 'inner' and 'spiritual' domain, to use Chatterjee's words, that is usually surrounded by holiness, immune to manipulation and ready to be invoked when self-identification is needed. Those elements or parameters of identity were deliberately chosen by the Omani elite and woven in a conscious manner. This process allowed the elite to articulate that identity at a time when the British were enforcing their own definition of 'identity' in Zanzibar, including that of Arabs, and at a time when the Omani elite needed to self-identify vis-à-vis their 'other', their colonial masters.

The British were very keen on, if not obsessed with, creating biological categories of identities to classify the heterogeneous Zanzibari population. Omanis identified themselves as 'Arabs' and were identified by the British as such but the British definition of an 'Arab' was one with which few Arabs would agree. An 'Arab', as Pearce indicated, is "the true Arab of unmixed descent,"[29] while "the Zanzibar negro", he added, "whose great-great-grandmother may have had some connection with an Arab harem, cannot fairly be classed at the present day as an Arab, as the term

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the most decisive feature of the Arab nation," despite the fact that Antonius considered ethnicity, shared traditions and language as the three main markers of defining Arab nationalism. Throughout his book, Antonius, as Cleveland notes, "fails to define the first, ignores the second.., and places most of his emphasis on the third." See idem, "The Arab Nationalism of George Antonius Reconsidered," in *Rethinking Nationalism,* 68. For more information on the role of language in defining an Arab, see Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist,* and Suleiman, *The Arabic Language.* My definition of a communal belonging or a collective identity is not to be understood along purely exclusive 'ethnic' terms. Islam and Arabism, i.e., religion and language, were equally crucial in defining the identity of the Omani elite and defining the 'nation' to which its members belonged.

[29] F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar: The Island Metropolis of Eastern of Eastern Africa*, 1st ed, 1920 (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967), 214. Pearce's racial categorization and definition, as outlined in his book, reflected the British mind at the time. His account became a reference to researchers who took that categorization for granted.

is understood in Zanzibar."[30] This definition of the term 'Arab' was surely one that was understood by the British alone and not by the Swahili society with its Arab and non-Arab members. On the one hand, "so dense have been the many forms of Arab/African intermingling over a great many cultures that there was no analogous line of demarcation between the Arab, the Arabized, and the non-Arab as there had been and continued to be between the European and the non-European."[31] On the other hand, it was not race but language and culture that marked the difference between an 'Arab' and a 'non-Arab'. Long before al-Busa'īdīs established their rule on the East African coast, "an ideal of cultural Arabness had already emerged in the mind of the Swahili."[32] This trend to 'Arabize' through linguistic and cultural assimilation intensified under al-Busa'īdī rule and 'Arabness' remained 'a mark of status' many desired to achieve.

'Arabness' in British eyes, in addition to being associated with 'race', was a socio-economic identity. An 'Arab' was a land-owner, 'a perfect gentleman', and a dweller "in a massive, many storied-mansion."[33] He was "par excellence a landed proprietor, and usually has his money in clove and coco-nut plantations."[34] Arabs of Hadrami or Comorian origins who did not fit in those categories were looked upon as inferior to Omanis. Thus, the British distinguished not only between an 'Arab' and a 'negro', to use Pearce's word but also between Omanis and other Arabic-speaking communities. Omanis seemed to have been regarded as *more* Arab than Hadramis and Comorians – indeed Comorians had to petition the British to be classified as 'Arabs'

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[30] Ibid., 215.
[31] Mazrui and Shariff, *The Swahili*, 28.
[32] Ibid., 29.
[33] Pearce, *Zanzibar*, 221.
[34] W. H. Ingrams, *Zanzibar: Its History and Its People*, new imp., (London: Frank Cass, 1967), 204.

in 1930.[35] Ingrams, writing in the late 1920s, considered Omanis the 'principal' Arabs in Zanzibar, although he admitted Hadramis were the most numerous.[36] His description of Arabs' lifestyle, social organization and occupation was restricted to Omanis.

Racial classification reflected European racial attitudes and mentality that could comprehend African societies and African history only in terms of classified races and tribes. However, this racial ideology found its way into British laws as articulated by the Native Administration Regulations in which social, economic and political privileges were allocated according to racial hierarchy.[37] The British, with their racially oriented policy, created a situation where race and class became intertwined to a significant degree.[38] In 1926 they created the Legislative Council, in which only Arabs, Asians and Britons could participate, thus institutionalizing an organic relationship between race and citizenship.[39] 'Arabs', from that perspective, were at a socio-economic advantage in comparison to those classified as Swahili or Africans and who were considered by the British as racially inferior.

The looseness of an 'Arab' identity in Zanzibari society however, provided many on the island with the opportunity to self-categorize as 'Arabs' in order to defy some British discriminatory laws. The years between 1924 and 1931, as the official

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[35] Comorians gained that status in 1939. See Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 45-46. Pearce included Mashihiri or Shihiris (Arabs from Hadramaut) and Comorians in the category of 'Arabs' but made a clear distinction between them and "the most numerous and important section of the Arab race in the Sultanate," in reference to Arab Omanis. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, 216.

[36] Ingrams, *Zanzibar*, 194-5.

[37] Institutionalizing privileges was neither exclusive to British colonialism nor confined to hierarchy of races. The French in Syria and Lebanon adopted a similar pattern that allocated more privileges to men than to women, to Lebanese than to Syrians, to Christians than to Muslims. See Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*.

[38] Frederick Cooper argues convincingly that the equation of race and class did not always apply in Zanzibar. See Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 168-9.

[39] The African communities were allowed representation on the Council after World War II.

census showed, witnessed an increase of nearly eighty percent in the number of individuals identifying themselves as 'Arabs'.[40] This trend persisted during World War II, when food rations and quality were determined according to racial category.[41] The British, in turn, did not have much control over the choice of those most affected by their laws or the categories with which they chose to identify. This fluidity in the choice of identity in colonial Zanzibar was necessitated by the need to accommodate daily social and economic realities and was inherently contrary to the aims of British racial policies.

The literature on identity politics in Zanzibar has so far accepted the British-ordained socio-economic variables as the only ones that Zanzibaris, including Arabs, drew on to define their identity. Lofchie's analysis of Zanzibari politics during the interwar period, for example, is based solely on an economic perspective that regards the indebtedness issue as the major factor defining not only political life but inter-communal relationships as well.[42] Cooper examines the period from exactly the same perspective but his depiction of the inter-racial and inter-ethnic relationships is more nuanced in examining the fluidity and the inter-racial mixing in terms of class.[43] Laura Fair, examining the 'cultural' identity of slaves in Zanzibar, relates cultural expressions of identity to underpinning socio-economic and ethnic factors.[44]

There is no doubt that identities expressed along socio-economic variables existed and had a deep impact on daily life in Zanzibar. This is what Chatterjee labels

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[40] Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 45.
[41] Ibid., 46-7.
[42] Lofchie, *Zanzibar*, especially Chapter 4, 99-126.
[43] Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters*, especially pages 158-172.
[44] See, for instance, Fair's introduction and chapter 4 on the music of Siti bint Saad. idem, *Pastimes and Politics*, 1-63, 169-225.

as the 'material' and 'outside' domain of identities, where economy and statecraft have the ability to manipulate identities and make them succumb to policies and regulations.[45] Those variables created realities on the ground that Zanzibaris could not escape and to which Zanzibaris, Arabs and non-Arabs, tried constantly to adjust.[46] The continuous shift of those affected by British laws between racial categories is a good indication of the degree to which identity shaping and reshaping was dependent on socio-economic variables. Even Omanis were not immune to them. For example, they established the 'Arab' Association at the turn of the century to claim compensation from the British after the abolition of slavery in 1897. Its constitution drafted in 1920 aimed at protecting their own economic interests and put a halt to their deteriorating situation. However, although all its members were Omanis, the Association did not claim to represent Omanis alone and did not restrict itself to economic activities. One of its mandates, for example, was to secure housing for Omanis and Arabs who migrated to Zanzibar. Another was to lobby for the ending of political representation on the Legislative Council on racial grounds. It is worth noting that the Arab Association was not created to assert the 'Arab' identity of Omanis vis-à-vis those classified as 'Swahili' or 'African' but rather to protect the interests of Arab Omanis against those of the Indian National Association to whom Omanis were deeply in debt.[47]

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[45] Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, 6.

[46] The same observation was made in Dutch ruled Java, where colonial divisions along ethnic lines prompted groups, including Arabs, to establish social and political organizations based on ethnicity. See Sumit K. Mandal, "Forging a Modern Arab identity in Java in the Early Twentieth Century," *Transcending Borders*, 163-184.

[47] Arab indebtedness to Indian moneylenders emerged when funds were sought by Arabs in order to develop clove and coconut estates in Zanzibar since the mid-nineteenth century. With the abolition of slavery in 1897, the irregularity of clove prices and high interests charged on those loans, the problem of indebtedness assumed considerable proportions by the early twentieth century. Arabs were

Thus, the degree to which Omanis defined their identity exclusively along those variables, as the historiography has often argued, is questionable or at least overblown. The identity of Omanis as 'Arab' was neither confined to those variables nor constructed on their premise. New material introduced in this work indicates that Omanis were engaged in debates other than those related to their economic (mis)fortune or to inter-ethnic politics inside Zanzibar. Moreover, and more significantly, the material presents an Omani definition of identity that is at variance with the one employed by the British and adopted by the prevalent literature that has fallen short of examining the identity of Omanis (and others) from a wider perspective, including factors not manipulated by the British. The members of the Omani elite did not see their 'Arabness' through a British lens and their definition of an 'Arab' was not in conformity with the British one. It is true that Omanis were Arabs, and like all Arabs, "have been exceptionally conscious of their language and proud of it..."[48] But their 'Arabness' was not based on 'race' nor was it considered *the* primary dimension of their identity. Omanis identified themselves first and foremost as 'Muslims', members of the universal *umma* of Islam and as 'Ibadis', followers of a specific sect; their 'Arabness' was not understood in nationalistic terms, at least not until after World War I. Even then, 'Arabness' was not devoid of a religious content and was largely shaped by Islam. In short, they were not exclusively Arabs but were 'Arab-Muslims'.

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increasingly losing their mortgaged land to Indian lenders. By 1933, they owned about half a million out of three million clove trees and held mortgages on about another 300.000 trees. A series of agricultural reforms introduced in the 1930s provoked the Indian National Association to boycott the clove industry and increased tension between the two communities, leading to physical violence in some instances. See, for example, Lofchie, *Zanzibar,* 104-126.

[48] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1789-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 260.

Using this binary definition of Arabness, as well as situating it in historical context is crucial for two reasons. First, it creates a common space between Arabs and other members of the Swahili society, a space provided by the 'Muslim' component of their identity that must have blurred to some extent the racial boundaries that have hitherto marked our understanding of identity politics in Zanzibar.[49] Even the *ustu'rabu* phenomenon, literally meaning 'Arabization', was strongly inspired by Islam in terms of pure religious dogmas or as a web of cultural practices – or, in some instances, both.[50] Second, it reformulates the identity of Omanis and provides it with a global dimension that reaches beyond Zanzibar and beyond identity politics inside Zanzibar. Theirs was a collective identity unconstrained by class or race or imposed boundaries, one that linked them to many of those who shared the same variables of their identity. The significance of this collective identity tied to the Arab world is the large scope of both the politics and intellectual dynamics that defined and shaped it.

Socio-economic variables delineated by the British have determined inter-racial and inter-ethnic identity politics in Zanzibar since the late nineteenth century. This 'Eurocentric mapping' of identity and 'Eurocentric construction of the Other'[51] has dotted the borders of that identity and circumscribed it by the economic, social and

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[49] This is not to deny the existence of racial boundaries or to deny that Arabs in Zanzibar were totally blind to those boundaries. The mark of difference however, was not based on color and race but more on culture as defined by the *ustu'rabu* phenomenon. The argument made here rather is that Arabs and non-Arabs shared common values that are not usually taken into consideration when examining their identity and their perception of each other. The case of Arabs in Java may be more exemplary of my point. Mandal's study on Arab identity in Java at the turn of the century shows how Arab and native leaders drew closer in the name of Islam to face the competition of non-Muslim Chinese. See Mandal, "Forging a Modern Arab Identity in Java," 165-66.

[50] This means that Islam at the coast was not only practiced as a religion but also as a cultural phenomenon that existed among non-Muslims as well. See Mazrui and Shariff, *The Swahili*, 34-35. Whatever the case was, as Mazrui and Shariff indicate, "In the Swahili people's own definition of the term Swahili, the faith of Islam still seems to feature as an important criterion." Ibid, 10.

[51] Both concepts are borrowed from Arif Dirlik, "Is there History after Eurocentrism? Globalism, Postcolonialism, and the Disavowal of History," in Arif Dirlik, *Postmodernity's Histories: The Past as Legacy and Project* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 70.

ethnic structures erected by the British inside the Zanzibari society. Taking only those variables into account has limited identity politics in Zanzibar to the terrain of the colonized themselves.[52] From that perspective, the British often appear in the literature as only manipulating identity and identity formation among the Zanzibari population. Identity politics in Zanzibar have usually been confined to the parameter of the colonized.

Ironically, shifting the basis of analysis from that of "colonizer/colonized" to that of "colonized/colonized" is one of the pitfalls of what Simon During calls 'reconciliatory' postcolonialism[53]. This approach

> privileges the 'liminal, subaltern figures' of 'the excluded middle' over the antithetical categories of colonizer and colonized, which in many ways have ceased to be antithetical as the boundary dividing them has been called into question for its essentialist and homogenizing assumptions."[54]

In searching for the agency of the colonized among the 'subalterns' in Zanzibar, an agency embodied in those marginalized by both the social order and

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[52] These were factors that had shaped the identity of Omanis since the beginning, not as Lofchie implies, since as recently as the 1940s. Examining the identity of Arabs from the perspective of the primacy of their language and religion explains the dynamics of their politics in relation to the British. Lofchie's analysis of pre-war politics is solely dependent on an economic perspective. However, in his attempt to explain what he calls anti-colonial Arab nationalism after World War II, he suddenly and abruptly shifts his analysis from an economic perspective to an ideological one rooted in Islam and Arab nationalism. His following comment "[t]hat Arabs should have become nationalistic at a time when there were no other nationalists in Zanzibar seems, at the very least, puzzling" is misplaced. Idem, *Zanzibar*, 128. First, it would not have been 'puzzling' had Lofchie examined the variables of identity as they developed since the early encounter between the Arab elite and the British, and had he related the development of what he called Arab nationalism to its wider context.

[53] Simon During. "Postcolonialism and Globalization. A Dialectical Relation After All?" *Interventions: The International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 1(1998): 31-2 and idem, "Postcolonialism and Globalization: Towards A Historicization of Their Inter-Relation," *Cultural Studies*14(2000): 385-404. During distinguishes between critical postcolonialism and reconciliatory postcolonialism. The former seeks "radical alternatives to modernity based on non-Western traditions and lifeways, while the latter works to reconcile colonized peoples to colonialism." Ibid., 385. While works on identity in Zanzibar do not advocate this approach specifically and do not intend to deny a dichotomy of colonizer/colonized, they nevertheless abandon this larger framework in favor of one that adopts a colonized/colonized perspective. Laura Fair's work however, remains the most nuanced as she makes the colonials part of the debates about identity making among ex-slaves.

[54] Arif Dirlik, "Rethinking Colonialism: Globalization, Postcolonialism, and the Nation," *Interventions: The International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 4(2002): 433.

colonial policies -- 'slaves', those categorized as 'Swahilis' or 'Africans'-- 'Arabs' became more the 'Other' than did the colonizers themselves. The fact that Omanis in Zanzibar were themselves in the category of the 'colonized' is routinely downplayed in the literature. It is true that the colonial state granted Omanis privileges that favored them over other 'racial' categories. Nevertheless, Omanis continued to hold their own grievances against the British. First, despite the claim by historians that the British were maintaining Omani political hegemony in Zanzibar,[55] Omanis were, after all, subjugated by the British. They were allowed to rule, not to reign. They lost sovereignty, not to mention a unified dynasty, as a result of British hegemony in the Indian Ocean. That loss was experienced at different levels and its impact, as the next chapter reveals, shaped much of the relationship between the British and the Omani elite. Second, their economic stature had been increasingly weakened since the abolition of the slave trade in 1873 and the subsequent abolition of slavery in 1897. It should be remembered that during the early decades of the twentieth century a number of Arab plantation owners went bankrupt or were otherwise forced to sell their land because of British labor and tax laws.[56]

Moreover, the colonial educational system generated constant complaints by Arabs who felt the education being offered not only marginalized their language and religion but ill-prepared them for the kind of jobs they hoped to obtain in Zanzibar's

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[55] See, for example, Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 42. I think the use of the term 'hegemony' to describe a circumscribed power, constrained and controlled by the British Foreign Office, later on the Colonial Office, is misplaced. Upholding a certain degree of the economic and social status of ruling elites in British protectorates was a characteristic of British Indirect Rule in many parts of the Empire. See Francis Robinson, "The British Empire and the Muslim World," *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, eds., Judith et al., vol. 4, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 199), 406. Describing this status in terms of 'hegemony' is to downplay the reality of the degree to which, in effect, the influence of those elites was limited and controlled.

[56] Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 38.

administration and economy.[57] Lofchie's claim that the British actively encouraged Arabs to enter the administration[58] is countered by Bennett's findings, rooted in a more careful analysis of the structure and racial politics of the educational system. He found that in the end, the system was promoting Indians rather than Arabs into the highest levels.[59] In the 1930s, the anti-colonial tone became even sharper; Arab grievances encompassed all domains, and even more significantly, moved beyond concerns limited to the conditions on the island to embrace those of the larger Arab-Muslim community. Those grievances centered on the desperate need of Muslims, especially Arab-Muslims, to change the course of history and to restore the glory of their religion. They were also centered on colonial policies in the Arab world -- most specifically in Palestine.[60] Thus, the extent of Omanis' 'victimization' by the colonial regime and the degree to which they recognized themselves to be 'objects' of colonialism should not be underestimated, currently held ideas about a British-maintained Omani 'hegemony' and a 'special' (non-'subaltern') relationship notwithstanding.

Moreover, because post-colonial studies are intimately bonded with the post-colonial condition, they tend to adopt the nation-state as the battleground or the testing ground for postcolonial criticism. The teleological relationship between anti-

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[57] See chapter 5 for a detailed discussion on this matter.
[58] Lofchie. *Zanzibar*, 58-59.
[59] Bennett, *A History of the Arab State*, especially pp. 222-231.
[60] That Palestine was (and remains) the cause célèbre of Muslims since the late 1920s and was a catalyst that refocused Muslim discourse during the interwar period around the need for Muslims to unite, has been noted by Cleveland, "The Role of Islam as a Political Ideology in the First World War," in *National and International Politics in the Middle East*, ed., Edward Ingram, (London: Frank Cass, 1986), 98. See also Ghazal, "Power, Arabism and Islam," 139-40, and Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization*. 2nd. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 225. Interest in the Palestinian question during the 1930s was also traced among Arab diasporas in Southeast Asia, where fear of a revitalized wave of pan-Islamism alarmed the British. See Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Conflicting Political Loyalties of the Arabs in Malaya before World War II," *Transcending Borders*, 49-50.

colonialism and the formation of nation-states has further reinforced the emphasis on national boundaries. This may eventually lead to re-adopting the same parameters from which this thesis is trying to break free. As Dirlik notes, contemporary postcolonial criticism shifted attention "from the critique of political economy to the critique of culture (Eurocentrism), and from the critique of the nation-state as an organ of power, a political entity, to the critique of the nation as cultural entity."[61] Thus, confining discussion of identity politics to the boundaries of Zanzibar -- whether as a political entity or a cultural one -- limits and constrains our understanding of the broader dynamics shaping the identity of the Omani elite.

This criticism of the shortcomings of post-colonialism is not aimed at denouncing post-colonialism as a theoretical framework or as an analytical tool. Post-colonialism remains today the harshest critique of colonialism and colonial discourses. As Bill Ashcroft and the editors of *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* put it,

> 'post-colonial theory' has existed for a long time before that particular name was used to describe it. Once colonized people had cause to reflect on and express the tension which ensued from this problematic and contested, but eventually vibrant and powerful mixture of imperial language and local experience, post-colonial 'theory' came into being.[62]

However, in order to restore the broad category of colonizer/colonized as a framework of inquiry that goes beyond Manichean dichotomies, or hybridities,[63] and in order to

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[61] Ibid., 442.

[62] Bill Ashcroft et al., eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995), 1.

[63] These two themes have dominated postcolonial historiography and have largely shaped analytical approaches to the colonizer/colonized encounter. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler summed up what seemed to be, for them at least, the purpose of postcolonial theory when they attempted to understand "why Manichean dichotomies had such sustaining power in the face of such obvious hybridity and variation." Idem, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 9. By reinstituting the category of colonizer/colonized I do not negate the existence of hybridities, which are, after all, a natural by-product of any colonizer/colonized

transcend the boundaries of the nation-state as the testing ground for the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, the approach adopted here is a 'globalist' one. Like post-colonialism,[64] globalism or globalization can mean different things.[65] It has usually been referred to as a 'phase' of history that started after the dismantling of the Soviet Union or a post-modernization phase.[66] This view was soon dismissed in favor of one that considers contemporary globalization to have originated in the mid-nineteenth century.[67] Economic historians were the first to join the debate questioning the novelty of globalization and also tracing the roots of globalization to the past. Like other social scientists, historians tend to disagree on how to employ the term and how far to go with it. While Anthony Hopkins sees it as "a theme that promises to resurrect some old lines of historical enquiry, to open up new ones, and to stimulate revisions to established interpretations,"[68] Roger Owen uses it "not to reproduce old orthodoxies or

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encounter. Instead of unveiling the dynamics of interaction between the two sides, I focus at the inner dynamics of the colonized alone as they were instigated by the colonizer.

[64] The complexity, if not most often the ambiguity of the term, is best analyzed in Ania Loomba. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998).

[65] Both terms are being used interchangeably in the literature. Cooper sees '*ization*' to imply "that it is doing so now, that this is the global age", idem, "What Is The Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian's Perspective?" *African Affairs* 100(2001): 189. His skepticism regarding globalization stems from the fact that he sees works on globalization to lean towards reading the present into the past with a teleological bias by "contrasting a present of flows with a past of structures." Ibid., 189. For an analysis of the variations in the meaning of the term, its definitions, and its historiographies, see Anthony Hopkins, "The History of Globalization – and the Globalization of History?" in *Globalization in World History*, ed., Anthony Hopkins (London: Pimlico, 2002), 11-46.

[66] Studies on globalization emerged in the 1990s, more specifically after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, to analyze the supra-national relationships, mostly defined by capitalism. It is no surprise that globalization has been mostly analyzed from an economic perspective and that it tends to focus on the contemporary period more than anything else.

[67] See, for instance, Herman M. Schwartz ed., *States versus Markets: The Emergence of a Global Economy*. 2nd. ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). Schwartz defines globalization as "nothing more than the reemergence of markets that states temporarily suppressed in the aftermath of the Great Depression and World War II," xii. See also *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 12(1998): 3-72 under "Symposium: Globalization in Perspective."

[68] Hopkins, "The History of Globalization," *Globalization*, 15. Hopkins' 'old line of historical inquiry' is geared toward finding a new way of resurrecting the field of imperial history. Globalization is one of the themes proposed by Hopkins to reinvigorate the study of imperial history, British imperial history more specifically. Anthony Hopkins, "Back to the Future: from National History to Imperial History," *Past and Present* 164(1999): 198-243.

to create new ones but simply to free up the mind."[69] "Freeing up the mind" from constraints imposed by disciplines and sub-field boundaries defines my methodology. Globalism as "the condition of being consciously aware of thinking and acting at a global level"[70] defines where my subjects located themselves and situates the prism through which they saw themselves reflected.

More significantly, this line of inquiry acknowledges the existence of joint worlds that encountered European global colonialism and hegemony in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by generating their own dynamics, dynamics built on broad structures that tied the local experience to the larger one. One of those worlds was the world of Islam with its own systems of global outreach represented by shared values, by scholarly networks, by pilgrimage, and by the universal *umma*.[71] In contrast to Hopkins' assertion that encounters with the West *created* joint though unequal worlds,[72] my argument is that colonialism -- being one phase of those encounters- stimulated existing dynamics, empowered long-held ideas and rejuvenated old networks. But there was a new focus, one geared toward facing colonial challenges by re-emphasizing the need for Islamic unity and a revival of religion -- its tenets and its practices. While those structures cut across all Muslim communities, the emphasis

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[69] Roger Owen, "Using Present Day Notions of Imperialism, Globalization and Internationalism to Understand the Middle East's Late Nineteenth Century/Early twentieth Century Past," in *The MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies. Crossing Boundaries: New Perspectives on the Middle East,* 4(2003): 8. Owen's perspective, as he put it, is "more free ranging". His methodology is based on pursuing the connections of global forces in any possible way that makes sense. Ibid., 15.

[70] Harper. "Empire, Diaspora and the Languages of Globalism," *Globalization*, 142.

[71] Those systems, for sure, were not characteristics of nineteenth century Islam only but have rather existed since the early history of Islam. See Richard M. Eaton, "Islamic History as Global History," ed., Michael Adas, *Islamic and European Expansion: the Forging of a Global Order.* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1993), 1-33.

[72] Hopkins, "The History of Globalization," *Globalization,* 2.

here is on Arabic-speaking communities with whom Omanis associated and who defined the parameters of their collective identity.

Historians have, rather tentatively, divided globalization into four phases: archaic, proto, modern and post-colonial. The scope of this thesis covers the third phase, i.e., modern globalization, (except for its last decade), which is defined as the period from the 1870s until the 1950s.[73] This phase in itself is divided into two eras: pre-World War I and post-World War II; the first characterized by an apex of global exchange and the second by a decline of globalization. The first era witnessed extreme political and intellectual ferment in the Arab and Muslim world, including Zanzibar. This is the period of European imperial ascendancy, leading to the colonization of Zanzibar and of many parts of the Arab world. The same period witnessed several *nahḍas* or renaissance movements, both religious and literary, the first characterized by Islamic reformism and renewal and the second by a cultural movement known as Arabism.

This was also the age of pan-Islamism, the 'global' shield of the Ottoman dynasty against European imperial hegemony that rallied Muslims outside Ottoman borders.[74] The Omani elite in Zanzibar, through its ties of identity, was pulled into the larger Arab-Muslim world and specifically, into wake of pan-Islamism. It responded

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[73] Recent literature has located the first wave of modern globalism in the decades before World War I. It was manifest in the economic sphere as well as the political and the cultural. Roger Owen has elaborated on that theme in his: "From Liberalism to Liberal Imperialism: Lord Cromer and the First Wave of Globalization in Egypt," in Israel Gershoni et al., eds., *Histories of the Modern Middle East: New Directions* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002) and idem, "Using Present Day Notions of Imperialism," 4 -16.

[74] Edmund Burke considers one feature of pan-Islam to be "a response of the Muslim populations outside of the borders of the Ottoman empire in Central Asia, India, Southeast Asia and Africa, and their attempts to gain the support of the Ottoman sultan (as the principal Islamic ruler) for their resistance to imperialist penetration." Idem, "Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance to French Colonial Penetration, 1900-1912," *The Journal of African History* 13(1972): 98.

to changes and challenges by situating itself in the global dynamics of Islam. This, as Harper notes, was the operative mode of the period that characterized the Muslim world as well as others[75]:

> Yet what is striking about this period is the extent to which the formative political debates were conducted over vast distances, the global perspective through which people confronted change. This was a world where events far afield – be it in Egypt, Japan, the Philippines or Ireland—were a common currency for all. Ideas of political community were not imagined solely around the territorial or administrative boundaries of imperial rule, powerful though these colonial categories were. They were based on harder connections and were international in outlook.[76]

Islam was the global perspective for Omanis in Zanzibar to confront change and to enable their political community to transcend the territorial boundaries of colonialism. It was the ideological global terrain where all local experiences met. Yet, Harper continues:

> within these contexts, universal or global ideas – of religion, of a globally informed anti-colonialism, of the idea of politics itself – were coming to occupy a larger part of objective social reality. In this way, in different locales, a wider range of predicaments was being discussed in similar terms; in adjacent locales, similar debates were being played out in similar ways, in similar language, translations or symbolism. At this point the local and the global converged. Often local communities did not need a direct external prompting to frame their actions in broader terms. Theirs was a response to more general sense of proximity to others.[77]

A different assessment of globalization has been suggested for the interwar period. From an economic perspective, the period between 1920 and 1950 is believed to have witnessed the closure of global flows of capitalism. It was a phase of

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[75] Islam was not the only 'world' that relied on its own structures and dynamics to face imperialism and negotiate its own space amid global forces. Buddhism reacted similarly. See Mark Frost. "'Wider Opportunities,'" 937-967.

[76] Harper, "Empire, Diaspora and the Languages of Globalism," *Globalization*, 156-7.

[77] Ibid., 157.

'deglobalization'.[78] A similar conclusion has been proposed from a political and cultural perspective, where "the closing of global possibilities after 1914 seems to have been very far-reaching."[79] My argument as it will be developed in chapter five is that although the political structure of the Arab-Muslim world following the collapse of the Ottoman dynasty had undergone fundamental changes, and although those changes had crippled some ideological currents and intellectual networks rooted in Islam, Islam's global dynamics were soon to regenerate themselves and revitalize those currents and networks. Islam, as William Cleveland has argued, might have lost its prominence in political discourse during the 1920s,[80] but by the end of that decade it regained its vigor as a globally informed ideology. Networks of scholars, especially those in which Ibadis participated, soon re-organized and Islam regained its stature to articulate a rigorous political ideology of internal unity and external resistance to

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[78] Hopkins, "The History of Globalization," *Globalization,* 29 and Ibid., 158.
[79] Ibid, 158-9; Bennison, "Muslim Universalism and Western Globalization," in *Globalization*, 92-93.
[80] Cleveland. "The Role of Islam," *National and International Politics,* 98. This assessment of the status of Islam as an ideology in the 1920s seems to be common wisdom but it nevertheless calls for more research on the period. Gershoni and Jankowski's analysis of the role of Islam in Egyptian politics in the 1920s is in harmony with Cleveland's conclusion. See Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: the Search for an Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Yet Cleveland in that same study and in his biography of Shakīb Arslān, and Gershoni and Jankowski in their subsequent work on nationalisms in Egypt, acknowledge the resurgence of Islam as a major ideology in the 1930s. See Cleveland, *Islam against the West*, and Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*. Why and how Islam lost its prominence as a political ideology in that decade is a question that still requires further investigation and most important, requires a methodology that goes beyond that adopted by Gershoni and Jankowski whose assessment of the 1920s is based on an analysis of the politics of a secular ruling elite who proved to be as alienated from the general populace as it could possibly be. Cleveland's statement is also in reference to "new political élites [who] embraced European-inspired concepts of state and society" and not in reference to those who maintained a more popular base and to whom he referred in his assessment during the 1910s and 1930s. Idem, "The Role of Islam," *National and International Politics*, 98. Perhaps ideological Islam, after all, did not lose its prominence in the 1920s but lost the means through which its proponents could make their case.

European hegemony.[81] At the same time, Islam re-emerged as the nexus of those networks and the kernel of their collective identity.

Contextualizing Islam

Commenting on the 'global civil society' created by the British Empire since the eighteenth century, Hopkins has recently observed that:

> [...] links across space and cultures could be sustained only by generating common core values and a lingua franca, and these were put in place by a few dominant nations with the power to spread their own diasporas while also inspiring imitation and instilling deference in other societies.[82]

Islam in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries might not have 'inspired imitation' or 'instilled deference', and at one point it ceased to constitute a politically dominant nation. Nevertheless, even during its weaker incarnations, Islam carried core values shared and treasured by all Muslims, regardless of their sectarian differences, values comprising the foundations of a "global Muslim Identity".[83] And the Arabic language constituted the lingua franca of Islam, its networks of scholars, and its global identity. Those, in addition to Muslim diasporas, sustained links among different Muslim communities and represented some of Islam's global dynamics. Though Muslims failed to put a halt to European hegemony and remained unequal in power, they nevertheless operated at the same level.[84] They did so by galvanizing their own inner

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[81] Those networks involved writers and scholars to whom Islam as an ideology of unity and resistance was a life time career. As Cleveland observes, "[t]heirs were the voices which provided an important link between pre-war, wartime, and post-war Arab ideology. They provided a continuous defence of Islam under attack; the campaign they waged is far from over." Cleveland, "The Role of Islam," 99. A reassessment of those networks and those involved in them may explain the gap in Islamic ideology between the 1910s and 1930s as discussed in the previous footnote.

[82] Hopkins, "The History of Globalization ," *Globalization,* 31.

[83] This is in reference to Ira Lapidus in his seminal work on the history of Islamic societies. Idem, *A History of Islamic Societies,* 2nd. ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 867.

[84] We see an example of this in the imperial behaviour of the Ottoman dynasty at the turn of the century. Its political entity represented Islam on the Universal scene, adopting policies that projected its image as an 'imperial' power. See Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London : I.B. Tauris, 1999).

dynamics that included, beside shared values, a lingua franca and diasporas, networks of scholars and activists, pan-Islamism and the tradition of revival, renewal and reform.

Those networks, while they have long been there,[85] were given particular prominence in the context of modern globalism. They were reinforced in the process of responding to European colonialism and succeeded, once again, in transcending social, economic and ethnic demarcations. Colonialism worked as a catalyst that invigorated old networks, forged new ones, and simultaneously sharpened a collective Muslim identity. Colonialism was a common agony and a real threat to the 'common Islamness'[86] of the societies involved, with what that 'Islamness' entailed in terms of shared dogmas, ideals, mores, and memories, and on which that Muslim collective identity reckoned.

Pan-Islamism is usually referred to as the Ottoman policy since the 1870s. It sought to establish links between the Ottoman court and Muslim populations in European colonies in order to galvanize their support. The purpose was to use that support as a political leverage in that Muslim dynasty's relationships with European

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[85] Ho defines the sixteenth century in particular –with the Ottoman suzerainty over Mecca and Medina-- as the starting point of those networks. He claims they gave rise to neo-Sufism, which in turn, disseminated reform impulses in the Muslim world between the sixteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Idem, "Before Parochialization," *Transcending Borders,* 23. Nehemia Levtzion and John Voll rather consider the eighteenth century as the defining moment for neo-Sufism. "Before the eighteenth century," they state, "*turuq* seem to have been loosely organized, and differences among them were vague… In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reformed *turuq* became more cohesive, with greater concern for the unique of doctrine, litanies, and practices of each *tariqah*…" Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll, eds., *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 10.

[86] This term is borrowed from Cleveland in his study on Islamic Nationalism as represented by the career of Arslān. Cleveland, *Islam against the West,* 99. Studies on the persistent dynamics of Islam as an ideology during the interwar period are few and this one offers an insight, through the career of Arslān, into the ways Islam continued to function within globalist structures represented by networks of ulama and pan-Islamist writers and thinkers -- though the author did not use the 'globalist' framework I am employing here in any specific way.

powers.[87] However, before the Ottoman court nurtured pan-Islamism as a political and diplomatic policy, it was a concept of 'brotherhood' embedded in the Quran and the Muslim tradition, and a sentiment of unity among Muslims.[88] But whether a policy, a concept, or a sentiment, pan-Islamism operated on the principle of spiritual unity among Muslims who belonged to *dār al-islām* (the domain of Islam). It created ideological liaisons within, as well as beyond geographic boundaries. That spiritual unity and those ideological liaisons were needed the most in the late nineteenth century. As one author commented, "when European powers became involved a Muslim community of interest could exist."[89] The Ottoman pan-Islamic policy did not create that community but was rather constructed on the premise that such a universal Muslim community existed, a community in which Zanzibar was a full member.

Although Islamic renewal has been a recurrent phenomenon throughout Islamic history, its scale and frequency since the eighteenth century has been exceptional.[90] Its scale covered many parts of Africa, Arabia, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia and South-East Asia. While much of that broader revival was generated from a standpoint of *tajdīd*, the necessity of renewal that is at the heart of

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[87] There is no doubt that this policy was effective insofar as it alarmed colonial powers to the potential instability pan-Islamism could generate. For the British reaction, see Azmi Özcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain (1877-1924)* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). Russian fear of pan-Islamism was also noted by Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (London; University of California Press), 194-7. For Dutch reaction to pan-Islamism in the Netherlands Indies, see C. Van Dijk, "Colonial Fears, 1890-1918: Pan-Islamism and the German-Indian Plot," *Transcending Borders*, 53-89; also Anthony Reid, "Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 26(1967): 267-283.

[88] Khalid argues that pan-Islamic sentiment was rooted in modernity, "which made it possible for the first time to imagine a community encompassing all the Muslims of the world." Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 195. To think of modernity as the force that *created* this pan-Islamic sentiment is to deny its existence as a bond, first and foremost, rooted in religious beliefs. Modernity did not make it possible for the first time to imagine the Muslim community but it made it possible to *visually* imagine it as Khalid's examples of modern geography and cartography suggest.

[89] Amira K. Bennison, "Muslim Universalism and Western Globalization," *Globalization*, 84.

[90] See John O. Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Muslim World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982); and Levtzion and Voll, eds., *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform*, 3-20.

Islamic beliefs, revival was prompted by the late-nineteenth century colonial factor that dictated self-reflection and self-criticism as a way to achieve self-improvement. This resulted in the creation of "the parameters of a new Muslim global discourse,"[91] that promoted dialogue not only among Muslims themselves but also between Muslims and non-Muslims. The nineteenth-century global print culture facilitated the dissemination of Arabic through periodicals and books, thereby circulating this lingua franca well beyond the Arab world itself. It reached each and every Muslim intellectual, *belletrist* and writer who could read Arabic, helping to bind a global community involved in renewal and reform together in an unprecedented manner.[92] 'Visualizing' that community through printed words and pictures shortened distances between the various communities of the large *umma* and rallied them around causes and events that had a global significance.[93]

Although Omanis in Zanzibar were Ibadis and as such, had their own networks that linked Ibadi scholars and Ibadi communities together, they operated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within the realm of global Islam. This is not to disregard the existence of sectarian variations that had long isolated Ibadis from Sunnis as well as from Shi'is or to claim that there was total indifference to sectarian issues. But the commonality of the colonial experience and the collective duty to protect Islam as a faith, as an ideology and as an identity against European hegemony

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[91] Bennison. "Muslim Universalism and Western Globalization," *Globalization*, 91.

[92] As Adeeb Khalid put it, "[t]he reader, the author, and the publisher were the heroes of this new community." idem, "Ottoman Islamism between the Ümmet and the nation," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 19(2001): 203.

[93] Edmund Burke notes the intimate relationship between pan-Islamism and the idea of the community of the faithful as well as the impact of established networks of pilgrims, merchants, and scholars on connecting Africa and the Middle East within the context of pan-Islamism. Idem, "Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance," 100.

resulted in an unprecedented Ibadi-Sunni convergence.[94] Pan-Ibadism that characterized the collaboration among Ibadi networks also tailored a neo-Ibadi trend that characterized the Ibadi-Sunni convergence.[95] As Wilkinson observes, "the Ibadis' experience of the imperial powers was putting them on a common footing with the rest of the world and leading to some effort to find common ground between them."[96] In other words, pan-Ibadism was revitalized under the same conditions that energized pan-Islamism, and the former should be seen as part of the latter, as one piece of the puzzle.

Islam, Collective Identity and anti-Colonialism

By integrating itself into Islamic discourses of reform and unity, by maintaining and strengthening its ties to the Arab world, and by cultivating an identity beyond British-imposed boundaries, the Omani elite had been shaping its own position vis-à-vis colonialism. That position, I argue, was one of *resistance* to colonialism. That this anti-colonial position existed even before the declaration of Zanzibar as a British protectorate is not a novel finding. Reginald Coupland's account in his seminal work of Arab opposition to British influence and British decision to split the dynasty into two parts, and his portrayal of Sultan Barghash's long held animosity toward the

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[94] The colonial period also witnessed a Sunni-Shi'ī convergence. See Hamid Enayat's argument, *Modern Islamic Political thought: The Response of the Shī'ī and Sunnī Muslims to the Twentieth Century* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1982). Bernard Haykel has observed a similar coming together of Sunnis and Zaydis. See idem, *Revival and Reform in Islam: the Legacy of Muhammad al-Shawkānī.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Haykel notes that by publishing certain works by traditionist ulama in Cairo in the early 20th century, Imām Yaḥya "was promoting the notion that Zaydīs were a 'moderate' sect no different in essence from the Sunnī *madhhabs*." Ibid. 206. Rashīd Riḍā, in his turn, praised the 'spirit of openness' exhibited by Zaydis who practiced *ijtihād* and thus, promoted reform and renewal in Islam. Ibid.

[95] See discussion in chapter 3.

[96] Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman,* 243.

British, is illustrative of that position.[97] However, general discussions of Arab elite resistance tend to be limited to looking at overt acts of opposition such as those of Sultan Barghash in 1856 and the early 1870s or of Sultan Khālid in 1896.[98] As studies on resistance movements in Africa, particularly East Africa, have shown, resistance can have several meanings, can take different shapes and can manifest itself in both covert acts and overt symbolic actions.[99] Moreover, the implication of the term 'resistance' is not meant to simplify the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. It remains in all contexts a complex one through which mutual relationships and mutual interests are negotiated and appropriated. However, as Dirlik warns, 'experiential' aspects of colonial encounters should not annul their structural context, the basic division between the colonized and the colonizer and should not blur "the depth of the victimization colonialism visited upon its 'objects'".[100]

On the other hand, Frederick Cooper cautions us not to reduce politics in any colony exclusively to anti-colonial politics and not to understand "resistance" as if the "R" is always capitalized and as if the concept is so broad as to deny people any other meaning in their lives.[101] Contextualizing politics and theorizing resistance, however, depends on what meaning we attribute to resistance and what scope we allow its development. Edward Said speaks of 'ideological' resistance to colonialism, one that follows a period of 'primary', armed resistance, and is regarded as "an alternative way of conceiving human history."[102] While the difference between primary and

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[97] Coupland, *The Exploitation of East Africa*, especially part I.
[98] See chapter 2 for more elaboration on Barghash's and Khālid's opposition to the British.
[99] See, for instance, Allen F. Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938-1961* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1996).
[100] Dirlik, "Rethinking Colonialism," 433
[101] Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection," 1519, 1532.
[102] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Great Britain: Vintage, 1994), 260

ideological is clear, the chronology of a primary resistance followed by an ideological one, as Said would have it, is questionable. In the case examined here, the situation is more one of process, with each phase continuously informing and overlapping with the other. This notion of a gradual form of resistance -- from primary to secondary -- can perhaps best be applied within a 'national' framework. There, a narrative of resistance usually attempts to link primary resistance movements to 'national' independence. This view has influenced African historiography of resistance in particular; here "[r]esistance was the key plot element in a continuous narrative of African history,"[103] and connections were made between 'primary resistance movements' in the early stages of colonialism and 'modern mass nationalism' later on.[104] A later revisionist view attempted to look beyond this framework in order to engage non-elites in resistance and to develop a less linear approach.[105] National borders, however, remain to inform and define the arena for acts of resistance.[106]

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[103] Cooper, "Conflict and Connection," 1520.

[104] Primary resistance has been perceived in African history as the precursor or the sign of modern mass nationalism. Terence Ranger was, initially, a proponent of this view. Idem, "Connexions between 'Primary Resistance' Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa," *Journal of African History* 9(1968): 437-53. But more recently he adopts a more nuanced view regarding the relationship between resistance and nationalism. See idem, "Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa," *African Studies Review* 29(1986): 1-69.

[105] This revisionist view was first promoted by Ranger in Ibid.

[106] A similar observation was made by Julia Clancy-Smith in her comments on resistance movements in Algeria. "[D]ealing with anti-colonial movements within the framework of modern, national boundaries," she states, "poses a methodological problem since the existence of crucial links between Algeria and the rest of the Maghrib or Mashriq go unperceived." Idem, "Saints, Mahdis, and Arms: Religion and Resistance in Nineteenth-Century North Africa," in *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements,* Edmund Burke, III and Ira M. Lapidus, eds., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 61. In her subsequent study, she makes a similar observation, noting that "the nation-state as a historical unit of analysis fails to accommodate the dynamics of popular protest in nineteenth-century North Africa," idem, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia, 1800-1904)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 258. Loomba includes pan-nationalisms, in addition to nationalisms, as challenging colonialism and cites pan-Africanism as one example. See Loomba, *Colonilism/Postcolonialism,* 211-215. However, it is not clear, based on Loomba's assessment, how pan-Africanism, apart from its anti-colonial rhetoric, mobilized anti-colonial activities and created networks and agents of resistance to colonialism.

Scrutinizing Islam in relation to colonialism from a globalist perspective reconfigures the territory and the ideology emboldening or inspiring resistance, whatever form it may have taken. Explaining his objection to French attacks on Tunisia in 1770-71, Sidi Sultan Muḥammad of Morocco told the French that "Everyone knows that the Moors, being of one religion, are obliged to assist each other."[107] In 1919, an Istanbul-based association called the Union of Islam was sending propaganda material to other Muslim countries "to synchronize their steps for achieving and maintaining their independence."[108] In reaction to the Wailing Wall disturbances in Jerusalem in 1929, Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, a writer of Syrian origin residing in Cairo and a prominent anti-colonialist, wrote on the front page of his newspaper *al-Fatḥ* that "Palestine is the Islamic world and the Islamic world is Palestine."[109] When 'communal' history can be conceived of as broadly as the Islamic world, confining the scope of resistance to colonialism to 'national' boundaries can be misleading. When colonialism assumes a global hegemony, anti-colonialism takes a global dimension. As Engseng Ho has observed in his most recent work on Muslim diasporas and empires, "[t]he internationalization of anti-colonial struggle has hung like a spectre over the Western empires since the end of the nineteenth century."[110] Collective identity can inform all kinds of resistance but is especially pertinent in considering ideological resistance, and as Said put it, ideological resistance is about "the will to *have* an identity and identity politics."[111] Thus, the Arab elite in Zanzibar,

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[107] Bennison, "Muslim Universalism," *Globalization*, 84.
[108] Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam*, 230
[109] Cleveland, "The Role of Islam," *National and International Politics*, 98.
[110] Engseng Ho, "Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 2, (2004): 241.
[111] Edward W. Said, *Power, Politics and Culture: Interviews with Edward Said*. ed., Gauri Viswanathan (New York: Pantheon Press, 2001), 189.

shaped by its 'communal' collective identity, was engaged in anti-colonial identity politics that can be best perceived and analyzed through the prism of ideological resistance.

Islam, the Omani elite, and Colonialism: beyond Historiography

The study of Islam under al-Busa'īdīs has been dominated by certain themes set since Spencer Trimingham first published his report on Islam in East Africa in 1962.[112] Trimingham's research was partially funded by the Church Missionary Society and first published by World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. His undertaking was to find out why Christian missions had done less well while Islam seemed to have been more successful in making converts. His findings suggest that it was European colonialism that facilitated the 'penetration' and 'infiltration' of Islam from the coast into the interior of Africa from the late nineteenth century until the 1930s. After a series of crises that plagued East Africa, colonialism, he argued, brought peace to the region. This paved the way for agents of conversion, whom Trimingham calls 'auxiliaries of European penetration' such as Muslim guides, interpreters and soldiers to proselytize Islam.[113] A major characteristic of East African Islam that Trimingham promoted in that survey was the difference between 'pure' Islam and 'popular' Islam, understood respectively as the Islam of 'Arabs' and of 'Africans'.[114]

Trimingham's thesis of colonialism introducing stability and peace was first countered by B. G. Martin's analysis of the disruptive nature of colonialism in East

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[112] J. Spencer Trimmigham, *Islam in East Africa: The Report of a Survey Undertaken in 1961* (London: Edinburgh Press, 1962).
[113] Ibid., 57.
[114] Trimigham wrote a classic on Sufism and his study was based on this same dichotomy of 'pure' and 'popular'. See idem, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*.

Africa. This was most obvious, according to Martin, in the resistance colonialism encountered. The most important organ of resistance was the Sufi Order. Not only did Sufi Orders resist but they also helped convert non-Muslims who saw in the Order a vehicle of political and social protest against colonialism.[115] Building on that same dichotomy of 'popular' and 'pure' Islam, Martin found the Order to be successful among Africans for its ability to promote a 'popular' version of Islam.

August Nimtz agreed with Martin that colonialism was a period of upheaval and that the Sufi Order played a major role in responding to that crisis. Muslim Sudanese soldiers recruited by the Germans and coastal Muslims appointed in administrative posts played a role in conversion. However, the crucial factor that made Islam more appealing to Africans in the interior, he adds, was the failure of the Maji-Maji rebellion in 1907, which created an anti-colonial ideological vacuum that was filled by Islam. "It was in the context of crisis and uncertainty," Nimtz states, "that Islam played once again a crucial role for many Africans."[116] Nimtz, however, attributes more weight to the Arab/African dichotomy, which is one of his 'cleavages' that characterized East African societies, and which he considered "of utmost importance in coastal society."[117] Orders appealed to Africans because of their 'proletarian' and 'egalitarian' character, represented by their 'African' – rather than

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[115] B. G. Martin. "Muslim Politics and Resistance to Colonial Rule: Shaykh Uways B. Muhammad al-Barawi and the Qadiriyya Brotherhood in East Africa," *Journal of African History* 10, no. 3 (1969): 471-486. A slightly modified version of the same article reappeared in idem, *Sufi Brotherhoods in* Nineteenth-Century *Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), chapter 6.

[116] August H. Nimtz, *Islam and Politics in East Africa: The Sufi Order in Tanzania* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 15.

[117] Ibid., 32.

Arab -- leadership.[118] Thus, Islam was "'nationalized' or 'Africanized' through the brotherhood".[119]

In the face of all this social and political upheaval caused by colonialism, members of the Omani ruling elite, especially the Sultans, have been portrayed at best as 'compromisers' and at worst as 'collaborators' with the colonial order. In other words, the elite is perceived as a politically conservative one that could not face the threats of colonialism. Their compromise or collaboration paved the way for Sufi Orders to be the agents of resistance to colonialism in East Africa and to be the channels of political change. This perception was not only perpetuated by the literature on Islam but also by political and economic studies on the Sultanate, as discussed above.

Pouwels, in his seminal work on Islam in East Africa, especially in the last chapter dealing with Islam under al-Busaīdīs, adopted all of the above arguments and sharpened the Arab/African dichotomy even further. First, the Sultans, described as 'instruments of Europeans', are put in one category with Europeans vis-à-vis coastal townspeople. The latter had to confront the colonials as well as their instruments and thus, "[t]he specific problems presented by a Sultanate waning in power and by an increasingly visible colonial presence followed class and ethnic lines."[120] They felt increasingly alienated and impatient with the new ulama,[121] in reference to Arab ulama, the symbols of 'high' or 'pure' Islam in the Sultanate. Townspeople found refuge in the new ideology, in the form of greater literacy in Arabic and stricter

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[118] Ibid., 71.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Randall Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 192.
[121] Ibid., 195.

adherence to the written law, transmitted to them in a 'popularized' version by the Sufi Orders.[122] Thus, the growth of the number of adherents to Sufi Orders created more tension between 'Arabs' and 'Africans', 'high' Islam and 'popular' Islam.

Francois Constantine reiterated Pouwels' African/Arab – high/popular dichotomies and also maintained that 'Arab' rulers thought of their religion as being exclusive and of their cultural norms as being superior, and thus did not want to spread them among 'Africans'.[123] It was left for the Orders to spread Islam. Moreover, the political order as well as the *ustu'rabu* 'civilization', represented by 'Arabs' "lacked the (political) strength to stand up to the one which was now challenging it."[124] The inability of Omani rulers and their ulama to stand up to colonialism caused the power-structure to collapse at the beginning of the twentieth century. The '*shaikh*' of the Sufi Order was, alone, able to provide continuity and coherence. The shaykh was African and "not compromised by links with groups too closely related to the arbitrary, oppressive foreign administration."[125]

In his recent chapter in *The History of Islam in Africa*,[126] Pouwels recaps the history of Islamic expansion and 'penetration' and re-asserts the 'agency' of Sufi Orders in converting Africans and as a result, in further promoting ethnic tension. The chapter, appearing in a 'state of the art' historiography, has played an important role not only in reifying Trimingham's earlier views but in assuring that they will

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[122] Ibid., 196.
[123] François Constantin, "Charisma and Power in East Africa, " *Charisma and Brotherhood in African Islam*, eds., Donald Cruise O'Brien and Christian Coulon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) Constantin published his article a year after Pouwels had published his book but he referred to Pouwels' doctoral thesis submitted in 1979.
[124] Ibid., 86.
[125] Constantin, "Charisma and Power in East Africa, " 88.
[126] Randall Pouwels, "The East African Coast, c. 780 to 1900 C.E.," in *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds., N. Levtzion and Randall Pouwels. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000).

influence, if not dominate, another generation of historians. Thus, between the time that Trimingham first published his survey in 1962[127] and the time that Pouwels' most recent chapter appeared in 2000, the historiography has changed remarkably little.

The analysis of Islam in Zanzibar and East Africa has so far been confined to the themes of 'conversion' and 'expansion' as being the major issues and the sole expressions of change in the modern history of Islam in East Africa. In seeking the roots of those changes, the analysis has been defined by the parameters of East African history, rarely taking into account possible links between changing expressions of Islam in East Africa and those in a broader setting.[128] Moreover, the Sufi Orders have become the 'representatives' of this changing Islam as they were able to employ Islam as a social and political ideology vis-à-vis colonialism. On the opposite side, the Omani ruling elite has been depicted as a politically crippled one that did not and could not possibly face colonial challenges. Ibadism, being confined to 'Arabs' and thus an incarnation of 'high' Islam, has not been considered as a possible venue through which Islam expressed 'changes'.

My work steps outside the dichotomies set by the present historiography, i.e., 'Arab' versus 'African', 'high' versus 'popular' and 'conversion' and 'expansion'. It transcends the Sufi Order as the only vehicle of change and transcends East Africa as the framework to analyze that change. It focuses on the Omani elite, Sultans included, and their Ibadi sect as they reflected changes under colonialism. Those changes are not

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[127] A subsequent edition appeared in 1964, followed by another in 1980, reinforcing the original arguments presented by Trimingham.

[128] The only exception to that is Anne Bang's study of the 'Alawiyya Order in East Africa. Bang resituated the Order and its role in changing expressions of Islam into the broader context of the East Indian Ocean. Bang's work, however, remained focused on the *tarīqa* as the vehicle of change in East Africa. See Anne K. Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa, 1860-1925* (London: Routledge, 2003).

seen in patterns of conversion to Islam but rather in the articulation of an identity defined by Islam, Ibadism and Arabism. Those are considered here the vehicles of protest against colonialism, the sources behind the Omani elite's ideological resistance to colonialism.

Thus, the ruling elite is not seen as politically conservative but rather as one responding to colonial challenges through its involvement in pan-Islamic, pan-Ibadi and pan-Arab movements and through its contribution to reform and renewal movements throughout the Arab world.[129] From that perspective, my analysis of Islam and of the politics of identity of the ruling elite is rooted in a much broader context than East Africa and is linked to global discourses shaping Muslims' reaction to colonialism.

Sources and Organization

Preliminary research began in Beirut in November 2001. I explored turn-of-the-century periodicals published in the Middle East, tracing contacts between Arab communities there and in East Africa. Zanzibar figured prominently as a major center of communication and as an important focus of interest for writers from the Mashriq. This initial research was complemented with trips to al-Asad library in Damascus, where I familiarized myself with published Ibadi (especially jurisprudence) literature. This pointed me toward common trends in issues and debates raised by both Ibadis and Sunnis, especially those related to Islamic renewal and revival. My findings

[129] This, however, does not mean that each and every member of the Omani elite articulated opposition to the British and their policies. As will be discussed in chapter 5, Omani intellectuals were as critical of the British as they were of other Omanis who either did not dare to criticize the British or did not hesitate to implement their policies. In any case, members of the Omani elite who voiced their opposition and adopted an anti-colonial discourse seem to have dominated Omani intellectual life on the island and to have shaped the political opposition to colonialism.

suggested that further research might reveal a deeper relationship between the Ibadi *nahḍa* and the Sunni one, as well as a more prominent role for Zanzibar in those *nahḍas*. The vigorous campaign launched by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture in Oman to publish and reprint Ibadi works encouraged me to continue my research from there. Moreover, the copy of Zanzibari archives pertaining to al-Busa'īdī period at the Ministry and the significant number of Omanis who had fled Zanzibar to Oman after 1964 rendered it an ideal place for further research.

My findings in Oman suggested that a trip to Zanzibar was not necessary. The Ministry in Muscat has a list of the Arabic material in the Zanzibari archives and a close scrutiny of the items listed convinced me that the archives in Zanzibar could not add any substantial material to my research.[130]

Social visits, a requirement and a necessity in Oman, provided an ideal setting to connect with other people. Through those connections I was put in touch with members of the Omani 'returnees' from Zanzibar, members of the ex-elite, now residing in Muscat, such as members of al-Busa'īdī, al-Barwānī, al-Lamkī, al-Riyāmī and al-Maskarī families. It was during the performance of those social duties that doors were opened for me to be introduced to members of those families and to have access to their stories, memories and documents and private papers. Unfortunately, private papers and documents are rather scarce given the circumstances under which Arabs fled Zanzibar. The dedication and enthusiasm of those members, however,

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[130] I obtained a similar list from Anne Bang, author of *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa, 1860-1925*.

matched mine and proved that Zanzibar remained as essential a piece of their present as it was of their past.[131]

I was also provided access to the copied Zanzibari archives.[132] Although they were not catalogued upon their deposit in the Ministry, I have referred to most of them by their original archival designations in Zanzibar.[133] In the Department of Manuscripts, one particular manuscript was of extreme relevance to my work.[134] Its content will be revealed and analyzed for the first time in this work.

Volumes of the two Arabic newspapers published in Zanzibar during the period under consideration, *al-Najāh* and *al-Falaq*, were also available.[135] However, only one volume of *al-Najāḥ* newspaper edited by al-Rawāḥī has survived in the Zanzibari archives[136] and was also photocopied and brought with the rest of the archival papers to the Ministry. Volumes of *al-Falaq* for the years 1938 and 1939 were also available at the Ministry.[137]

Another destination for researchers is Sayyid Muḥammad al-Busa'īdī's library, one of the largest private libraries in Oman. This rich and well-organized library has a section on Zanzibar, where I came across a copy of *Tārīkh zanzibar*, the first history book of Zanzibar in Arabic that dated from 1900.

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[131] Index I contains a list of the names of those with whom I had 'formal' discussions.
[132] Most of the Zanzibari archives brought to the Ministry were still in the Department of Documents and Manuscripts and the few organized files were removed to the Department of Archives
[133] The original list was provided to me by Anne Bang.
[134] Nāṣir bin 'Udayyim al-Rawāḥī, "Kitāb warada min zanjubār min Abi Muslim Nāṣir bin Sālim bin 'Udayyim al-Rawāhī ilā imām al-muslimīn bi 'umān Sālim bin Rāshid bin Sulaymān al-Kharūṣī a'azzahu Allah, 1915." TMs (photocopy), #738. Manuscripts Section, Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Muscat, Oman. The manuscript is in 17 pages.
[135] Copies of those newspapers can be found in both the Ministry and at the University of Sultan Qābūs in Oman Room.
[136] This was confirmed to me by Muḥsin al-Kindī, an Omani researcher who had direct access to the archives in Zanzibar and who had searched for copies of *al-Najāḥ* and found the aforementioned volume only.
[137] The same volumes can also be found at Oman Room at the Library of Sultan Qabūs University.

A second visit to Lebanon and Syria in the summer of 2003 provided me with the opportunity to acquire additional material from Arabic periodicals, mainly *al-Ahrām*, *al-Manār*, and *Jarīdat Tarābuls*.

What was most notable about the materials I was finding was the extent to which knowledge produced in one part of this far-flung intellectual world resonated elsewhere. An Ibadi pan-Islamist treatise published in Egypt, for example, would have resonance and impact in Oman, Zanzibar and Algeria.[138] An article written in a Zanzibari newspaper would have been inspired by events in the Mashriq.[139] Some words, idioms and expressions were common currency among Muslims and they belonged to a discourse that had a global outreach. Thus, contextualizing the text in its broader setting and establishing links through which it was routed from one place to another is essential to unfolding the process through which Arabs in Zanzibar were incorporated into the Arab world.

This dissertation is the first study that constructs this period of the Omani rule in Zanzibar using a large number of Arabic materials, whether in terms of correspondence, primary and secondary sources, newspapers or manuscripts. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are mine.

Organization

The chapters are organized and conceptualized geographically, mapping Zanzibar's relationship with Oman first, then with Algeria and the Mashriq. In each chapter, ideas, events and intellectual currents are outlined in the context of their movement between these places.

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[138] See chapters 3 and 4 for more details.
See chapter 5 for more details on the content of *al-Falaq*.

More specifically, chapter two examines Zanzibar's relationship with Oman, the source of the 'Arab' elite's spiritual guidance and religious authority. Oman witnessed two *coups d'états* between 1868 and 1913, under the leadership of a religious movement known as the Imamate. Members of the Omani elite in Zanzibar played a significant role in supporting those *coups d'états* in one way or another. This chapter explores the ideological and political underpinnings behind that support. Special attention is given to the Omani leader Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī, some of whose writings mirror the continuous interaction between Zanzibar and Oman.

Chapter three discusses the ideological and historical links between Oman and the Mizab region of Southern Algeria, and their impact on links subsequently forged with Zanzibar. It analyzes that relationship in the context of pan-Ibadism and Ibadi religious renaissance at the turn of the century. A major scholar behind that Ibadi renaissance was Muḥammad Atfiyyash from the Mizab valley. He was well-connected with both Oman and Zanzibar and an outspoken critic of colonialism. It is within this colonial setting that his role in pan-Ibadism as well as pan-Islamism is depicted. This chapter also explores the links between Zanzibar and the Ottoman court and discusses Zanzibar's role in Ottoman pan-Islamism. Moreover, it analyzes the relationship between Zanzibar and the literary and religious *nahḍas* in the Arab East. That relationship was not regulated or ordained by the sectarian affiliation that characterized the relationship to Oman and the Mizab but rather was shaped by a combination of Islam and Arabism. In light of those contacts and ties, members of the Omani elite in Zanzibar perceived themselves as members of movements of Islamic renewal, reform and solidarity.

Chapter four analyzes the writings of Abū-Muslim al-Bahlānī, one of the most eloquent Omani ulama writing in Zanzibar between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His writings, including his poetry and a long letter sent to Imam Kharūṣī in Oman, reflect the depth of the impact of pan-Ibadism, pan-Islamism and Islamic reformism on members of the Zanzibari intelligentsia. What bound those intellectual currents together was a strong anti-colonial sentiment reflected strongly in both tone and rhetoric.

Chapter five focuses on the interwar period. This era witnessed the apex of colonial hegemony over the Muslim world, but was also a time when Islam remained central to many communities for whom competing secular ideologies had little appeal at the time.[140] The Arab elite in Zanzibar continued to articulate its identity in terms of Islam, Ibadism and Arabism. As articles from *al-Falaq* newspaper indicate, after World War I, Arab unity within the framework of Islamic solidarity became one of its focal arguments. Moreover, what characterized this period is the role the Ibadi 'diaspora', most of whom were exiles created by colonial powers, played in maintaining networks and disseminating reform, as well as in promoting a strong anti-colonial agenda. The Ibadi diaspora became integrated in movements of Islamic reformism and Islamic unity. It functioned as a link between the Arab East, the Arab West, Oman and Zanzibar.

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[140] Commenting on the activities of two pan-Islamists, Shakīb Arslān and Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, Cleveland states that they, "with their appeal to Islamic bonds, more accurately reflected the sentiments of majority Arab opinion than the politicians of the period." Cleveland, "The Role of Islam," *National and International Politics*, 99. Jacob Landau, for example, considers pan-Islamic activity in the interwar period to be incidental and disorganized. Jacob Landau, *The Politics of pan-Islam*, 228. It might have been disorganized but hardly incidental.

The chapters outlined above aim at resurrecting what has been until now a buried past of an Arab elite that has been marginalized in both African and Middle Eastern histories. They shed light on its role in and contribution to modern Arab-Islamic history by situating its ties of identity within the Arab world, and more specifically within its Salafi oriented movements. That role defies its previous portrayal as a 'passive' collaborative elite that did not react to changes brought about by colonialism. In the process of exploring that history, aspects of modern Ibadi thought are revealed and more light is shed on the pioneers of that thought. However, Ibadi thought is not analyzed in isolation but in the larger context of Islamic thought as it developed in the late nineteenth century until the eve of World War II. This sheds light on the intellectual convergence between Ibadis and Sunnis within the colonial context.

Chapter II
Zanzibar and Oman: The Firm Bond

Introduction

When al-Busa'īdīs extended their rule into East Africa and moved their capital city to Zanzibar in 1832, the latter became a homeland for many Omani migrants. While Zanzibar, and the East African coast for that matter, had enjoyed special relations with Oman for centuries, it was in the nineteenth century that Zanzibar was brought under direct and formal Omani rule. The monsoon winds, and later steamships, kept the flow of Omanis between the two domains of Omani rule a regular one. Oman and Zanzibar became sides of the same coin, forging a complex relationship that makes isolating modern Zanzibari history from that of Oman a difficult if not impossible task. After all, al-Busa'īdīs and the elite around them were Omanis, for most of whom Zanzibar was an extension, not an alternative, of their home country Oman. When Britain enforced a separation between the two intertwined parts in 1861, the results were devastating for both, though in different ways, and shaped their subsequent history dramatically.

My argument is that the relationship between Oman and Zanzibar after the separation should be analyzed in terms of historical continuity and even interdependency. For this purpose, I reconstruct in what follows the narrative of the relationship between Oman and Zanzibar to underline the continuing political and spiritual bond between the two Omani communities long after the split. That bond was largely shaped by Islam, namely Ibadi Islam,[1] with its doctrine of the Imamate. As it

[1] Ibadism or *ibāḍiyya* is a Muslim sect named after 'Abd Allah ibn Ibād, one of the founders of that sect. It is usually considered an offshoot of Kharijism (*khawārij*), a description usually denied by Ibadis who consider the *khawārij* to be an extreme group and fundamentally different from Ibadis. The

will be outlined, that doctrine defined Omanis' relationship with their rulers on the one hand, and their relationship with the British on the other. It explains the underpinning ideology that stimulated the two *coups d'états* in Oman launched in 1868 and 1913 respectively and constituted the political side of the Omani *nahḍa*. I then highlight the Zanzibari factor in that *nahḍa* and argue that the separation of Zanzibar from Oman had serious repercussions in both regions and determined the future relationship between Omanis at home and abroad. Evidence presented below shows that many of Omanis in Zanzibar supported those *coups d'états* or supported anti-British activities in one way or another. Sultan Barghash, Khālid and Ḥamad each tried to assert the independence of Zanzibar from Britain and to claim its Omani connection. When they failed, many of their supporters went back to Oman to join the cause of the Imamate. Those who remained in Zanzibar defended it and the Imamate by other means.

Political closeness was accompanied by a spiritual one. This is manifest in the *fatwas* and advice Omanis in Zanzibar sought from the prominent Omani scholar at the time and the leader of the second *nahḍa*, Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣālimī, who provided them with guidance.[2] Like the *nahḍa* itself, al-Sālimī's answers fit within a wider context of

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khawārij were a group of Muslims who opposed the arbitration that took place between Mu'āwiya, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, and 'Alī, the Caliph, during the battle of Ṣiffīn in the first century of Islam. Khariji history had been tainted by a reputation of violence and extremism, when a group from among the *khawārij* assassinated 'Alī and attempted to kill Mu'āwiya. Ibn Ibāḍ did not approve of the killing of fellow Muslims or the underlying ideology justifying it. His followers became known as *jamā'at al-muslimīn* (the Muslim Group), as *ahl al-maḥkama* (in reference to those who refused the arbitration) and more significantly as *ahl al-qa'da* (those who refused to rise and fight). After the death of Ibn Ibāḍ, his pupil the Omani Jābir bin Zayd al-Azdi moved to Oman, where Ibadism took roots and flourished. See al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-a'yān*, 'Awad Khulayfāt, *Nash'at al-ḥaraka al-ibāḍiyya* (The Origins of the Ibadi Movement). ('Amman, 1978), and Rajab Muḥammad 'Abd al-Halīm, *Al-Ibādiyya fi misr wa 'alāqātihim bi ibāḍiyyat 'umān wa al-basra* (The Ibadis of Egypt and their Relationship with the Ibadis of Oman and Basra) (Al-Sīb: Maktabat al-Ḍāmirī, n. d.), Savage, *A Gateway to Hell*, and Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*.

[2] Al-Sālimī's collection of *fatwas* contains numerous questions sent from Zanzibar and pertaining to a variety of issues, from trade to slavery, from dress codes to marriage. See 'Abd Allah al-Sālimī, ed.

Islamic renewal and reform, unity and anti-colonialism. Thus, while the Zanzibari-Omani relationship had its own characteristics fashioned by Ibadism, it was nevertheless tied to broader developments in the Muslim world. The last part of this chapter analyzes the content of the correspondence between al-Sālimī and Omanis in Zanzibar and traces, through that correspondence, ties between the modern Ibadi intellectual movement and the more general Arab and Muslim thought.

Forging the Bond: Zanzibar and Oman, Sultans and ulama

Trade and migration had planted both Islam and Muslims into Zanzibari soil since the rise of Islam. Strong Muslim communities had become established on the East African coast since the tenth century A.D, prominent among them were several from Oman. Omanis continued to maintain trade relationship with the East African coast without exercising any significant political influence until the late seventeenth century. Their success in ousting the Portuguese from Oman in 1650, under the leadership of the Ya'āriba, prompted local rulers on the East African coast to invite them to continue their mission and evict the Portuguese who had maintained control of Mombasa, Kilwa, Zanzibar, Pemba and Mozambique. Between 1698 and 1728, the Portuguese were driven out by the Ya'āriba and remained confined to Mozambique. Omani success in helping those coastal cities boosted their reputation and confirmed Omani supremacy in the Western Indian Ocean.[3]

Jawābāt al-imām al-Sālimi lil-imām Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd Allah bin Ḥamīd al-Sālimī, 2nd. ed., (The Answers of Imam al-Sālimi) (n. p., 1999).

[3] For more information see Patricia Risso, *Oman and Muscat: an Early Modern History*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), especially chapter 7, John Middleton, *The World of the Swahili: an African Mercantile Civilization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), mainly chapter 2, Sir Reginald Coupland, *East Africa and its Invaders: from the Earliest Times to the Death of Seyyid Said in 1856* (Oxford: Faber & Faber LTD., 1968) and idem, *The Exploitation of East Africa*, R. L. Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

The establishment of al-Busa'īdī rule in Zanzibar in the nineteenth century 'centralized' and 'formalized' this Omani supremacy. As John Wilkinson indicates, Sayyid Sa'īd, the Sultan of Oman who pioneered this stage in Omani-Zanzibari history simply "recognized a developing current and knew how to move along with it."[4] Yet al-Busa'īdī rule in Zanzibar did more than formalize Omani supremacy. It initiated an era of 'formalized' and 'institutionalized' Islam in Zanzibar, and the East African coast for that matter, by providing opportunities for an unprecedented spread of Islamic institutions and of a literate Islamic tradition that was Arabic in character.[5] The carriers of that tradition and the upholders of those institutions were mainly the ulama who were drawn from different parts of the Arab world, mainly Oman and Hadramawt. Those ulama did not only run institutions and transmit a tradition of Islamic learning, they also brought ideas and ideologies, ties and connections, and along with the rulers, they changed the intellectual and political landscape of Zanzibar. Together they pulled Zanzibar closer to the Arab-Ibadi/Muslim world.

The ambitious plan of Sayyid Sa'īd to transform Zanzibar into a major economic center, an international seaport, and most significantly into an 'imperial' Omani seat opened the gates for a flood of Omani migrants into Zanzibar. Merchants, investors, traders and ulama came to settle on the island. This also stimulated the migration of other Muslim communities, mainly from Hadramawt and India. Sayyid Sa'īd also needed a state machinery in order to firmly extend his rule into Zanzibar, a machinery capable of running institutions, upholding the rule and regulating daily life. "In many ways," B. G. Martin has observed, "the religious, the learned, the legal and

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[4] Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, 66.
[5] See Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, chapter 10.

the clerical classes were the flywheel of the Busa'īdi state."[6] That state was born out of a Muslim tradition where the religious elite is molded with the ruling one and is ordained to be the backbone of the state machinery. Thus, the religious elite headed by the ulama was part and parcel of the al-Busa'īdī dynasty -- they staffed the palace as advisors and consultants, the courts as *Qādīs* (judges), the mosques as *Imāms* (religious leaders), and the *madāris* (schools) as teachers. They ran the *waqf* (religious endowment) institution and were major participants in the *barza*[7] of the Sultan. Those ulama exposed Zanzibar to a diverse world and to its many political and intellectual currents. As a result, Zanzibari history became intertwined with that of the regions from which its many people had been arriving, and with which Zanzibar had become closely associated.

Al-Busa'īdī rule in Zanzibar might have been an extension of that in Oman, but Zanzibar was no replica of Oman. Zanzibar was a much more diverse and open society than Oman and the Ibadi rulers set a policy marked by tolerance toward other sects and religions.[8] Sunni Muslims representing the majority of Muslims in Zanzibar were as close to the rulers as Ibadis were and were as respected and venerated as their Ibadi counterparts.[9] Tribal feuds and rivalries that had plagued Omani history and had

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[6] B. G. Martin, "Notes on Some Members of the Learned Classes of Zanzibar and East Africa in the Nineteenth Century," *African historical Studies* 4, no.3 (1971): 526.

[7] The *Barza* was the meeting held and headed by the Sultan of Zanzibar and it took place once or twice a week. It was usually attended by an invited group of Zanzibaris, where many issues could be discussed: political, religious, economic…

[8] This, of course, does not mean that tension between Ibadis and Sunnis, for example, did not arise from time to time. There are a number of episodes whereby conversion from Ibadism to Sunnism caused the fury of one Zanzibari Sultan or another. Barghash was particularly known to have used coercive policies towards those Omanis –especially from influential families-- who changed their Ibadi affiliation to Sunnism. For example, he locked up Shaykh 'Alī bin Khamīs al-Barwānī and Shaykh 'Ali bin 'Abd Allah al-Mazrū'ī when he heard of their change of sectarian affiliation.

[9] Sayyid Sa'īd and his heirs were very serious about their policy of tolerance and accommodation of non-Ibadis and non-Muslims. The decrees issued for that purpose are listed in al-Mughayrī. See Sa'īd

always threatened its stability and progress were almost absent on the island. Tolerant, stable, and metropolitan, Zanzibar attracted a significant number of Muslim scholars from Oman and elsewhere.

One of the most prominent high-profile scholars who accompanied Sayyid Sa'īd to Zanzibar was Nāṣir bin Jā'id al-Kharūṣī (1778-1847), the most renowned Omani scholar of the period. He was the son of *Abū al-nahḍa* (the father of *the nahḍa*) Abī Nabhān Jā'id bin Khamīs al-Kharūṣī (d. 1822), who had been a foe of Imām Aḥmad, Sayyid Sa'īd's grandfather. Unlike his father, Shaykh Nāṣir was close to al-Būsa'īdī family, kept Sayyid Sa'īd's company and was his closest confident.[10] The Sultan relied on his friendship and religious authority when he sent him to Oman on several occasions to offer help and advice to his son Thuwaynī, his appointee in Muscat.[11] Zanzibar suited Nāṣir very well and offered a comfortable haven where he could publish on several topics including dogma, jurisprudence, medicine, astronomy and even herbal medicine.[12] Nāṣir died on May 9, 1847 in Sayyid Sa'īd's arms -- in indication of their intimate relationship -- and was buried in Mtuni in Zanzibar.[13]

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bin 'Ali al-Mughayrī. *Juhaynat al-akhbār fi tārīkh zanjubār*. 4th. ed., (A Precise History of Zanzibar) (Oman: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa al-Thaqāfa: 2001), 271-273.

[10] Nāṣir first inherited his father's animosity towards al-Busa'īdīs but his relationship with them was to change later. Al-Sālimī elaborated on that change of heart in his chronicle stating that Nāṣir became so poor that all religious communities in Oman -Muslims and non-Muslims- petitioned Sayyid Sa'īd to aid Nāṣir. Nāṣir seemed not to have objected to the Sultan's offer of help and with time became a close confident for Sayyid Sa'īd. But the latter's courtesy might not be the real motive that won this renowned scholar to his side. The ability of that Sultan to arbitrate between Omani tribes and pacify his country, and his aggressive policy of expanding Omani rule might have appealed to many Omanis, including previous critics. In fact, Nāṣir's father who opposed Imam Ahmad al-Busa'īdi and his son Sa'īd not only neutralized his relation with Sultān, Sa'īd's brother when the latter took over but also aided him to win over his brother in his bid to replace him. The reason was that Ṣultān's internal policies appealed to Abī Nabhān. See al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-a'yān* , vol. 2, 185-230.

[11] See 'Abd Allah bin Ṣāliḥ al-Fārisī, *Al-Būsa'īdiyyūn ḥukkām zanjubār*, 3rd. ed., (The al-Busa'īdī Rulers of Zanzibar) (Oman: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa al-Thaqāfa, 1994), 89-90.

[12] Al-Khalīlī, Aḥmad bin Ḥamad, "Al-'Umāniyyūn wa atharuhum fi al-jawānib al-'ilmiyya wa al-ma'rifiyya bi sharq afriqiyya." (The Intellectual Influence of Omanis in East Africa) in *Al-'Umāniyyūn wa dawruhum al-ḥaḍārī fī sharq afriqiyya*.(The Civilized Role of Omanis in East Africa) (Muscat, 1992), 182-183. Nāṣīr's book on herbal medicine is entitled *Al-Sirr al-jaliyy fi dhikr asrār al-nabāt al-*

Other prominent Omani scholars who moved to Zanzibar were 'Abd Allah bin Mubārak bin 'Abd Allah al-Nizwī, the first Ibadi Qāḍī under Sa'īd and Muḥammad bin 'Alī al-Mandhirī, Chief Qāḍī of Zanzibar. Muḥammad's brother 'Abd Allah was also appointed after his brother's death as Chief Qāḍī as was Muḥammad's son, 'Alī.[14] The establishment of al-Busa'īdī rule also attracted scholars from different regions, such as Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Qaḥṭānī of Yemeni origin but born in Brawa on the Somali coast. He came to Zanzibar in the 1830s, where he was appointed Qāḍī. He funded several Qur'anic schools and a mosque and published in both Swahili and Arabic.[15]

With the presence of this scholarly elite, both Ibadi and non-Ibadi, Zanzibar built for itself a reputation not only as the metropolis of East Africa and the Red Sea but also as an increasingly significant hub of Muslim scholars and as a flourishing center of scholarly activism.[16] This reputation was boosted under the rule of Sultan Barghash, a Sultan keen on religious renewal, modernization and progress.[17] It is to him that scholars in Zanzibar and in the Ibadi world owe the establishment of a printing press that sponsored the publication of religious and literary texts by

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sawāḥīlī (The Manifest Secret in Listing Swahili Plants). Its introduction contains a full description of the Swahili language. Ibid.

[13] Al-Fārisī, *Al-Būsa'īdiyyūn*, 89-90.

[14] al-Fārisī considers the prestigious Mandhiri family the most scholarly family in Zanzibar. See al-Fārisī, *Al-Būsa'īdiyyūn*, 74. See also, Ibrahīm al-Zayn Soghayrūn. *Dawr 'Umān al-siyāsī wa al-iqtisādī wa al-ijtimā'ī fi sharq wa awāsit afriqiyyā fi al-'ahd al-Busa'īdī*.(Omani Political, Economic, and Social Role in East and Central Africa under al-Busa'īdis) (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1993).

[15] al-Fārisī, *Al-Būsa'īdiyyūn*, 75-76.

[16] See Ibrahīm al-Zayn Soghayrūn. "Al-ishām al-'umānī fī al-majālāt al-thaqāfiyya wa al-fikriyya wa al-kashf 'an majāhil al-qārra al-afriqiyya" (The Omani Contribution in the Cultural and Intellectual Fields a..d in the Discovery of the Interior of Africa), in *al-'Umāniyyūn wa dawruhum al-ḥaḍārī*, 206.

[17] Barghash's contribution to the Ibadi renaissance in the 19th century and his care for the pious and the poor ranked him among the most celebrated al-Busa'īdi Sultans. Even Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī, who treated Omani history in his *Tuḥfa* separately from that of Zanzibar and the 'Sawāhil', devoted few lines to Barghash whose virtues he listed and praised. Beside Sayyid Sa'īd, Barghash was the only Sultan of Zanzibar to whom al-Sālimī paid attention in his chronicle of Omani history. See al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-a'yān*, 241.

Zanzibaris and non-Zanzibaris, Ibadis and non-Ibadis.[18] Despite the fact that British policies under his rule had started to curb the power of the ulama since the mid 1870s,[19] he nonetheless guaranteed them a major role in the affairs of the Sultanate and lent them his unwavering support. Moreover, Barghash's rule witnessed a new wave of Omani immigration, which brought with it several prominent scholars such as Yaḥyā bin Khalfān bin Abī Nabhān al-Kharūṣī who became a chief Qāḍī, Sālim bin 'Udayyim al-Rawāḥī who left for Zanzibar around 1878 and Sayf bin Nāṣir al-Kharūṣī who, like al-Rawāḥī, was also appointed Qāḍī. Ulama from Hadramawt and elsewhere shared this courtesy as well.[20]

The influence those ulama exercised and their involvement in the publishing of religious texts not only institutionalized Islam on the island but also guaranteed Zanzibar a prominent place on the map of their world. Zanzibar became interwoven into their networks of contacts and the web of their ideas and beliefs. That was most obvious in the case of Omani scholars to whom Zanzibar was an extension of their

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[18] Al-Mughayrī listed a number of Ibadi works published by this press but added that the actual list contained additional titles. See al-Mughayrī, *Juhaynat al-akhbār*, 337. Although most sources state that Barghash imported the printing press in the 1870s, De Tarrazi, in *Tarīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-'arabiyya* (History of the Arab Press), claimed that Barghash bought it in 1884 from the Jesuit Press in Beirut and hired some of its staff to operate and run the press in Zanzibar. See Philip De Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-'arabiyya*,vol. 3 (Beirut: al-Maṭba'a al-Adabiyya, 1933), 270. It is more likely that Barghash decided to import a printing press after his visit to Egypt in 1875, when he visited al-Būlāq printing press in Cairo. See Zāhir bin Sa'īd, *Tanzīh al-abṣār wa al-afkār fi riḥlat sultān zanjubār* (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa al-Thaqāfa, n. d.), 216-17. The one imported in 1884 was, as Philip Sadgrove suggests, another printing press bought by Barghash. See Philip Sadgrove, "From Wādī Mīzāb to Unguja: Zanzibar's Scholarly Links," *The Transmission of Learning*, 189.

[19] This pressure by the British to curb the power of the ulama, especially their power in the court, continued well after Zanzibar was proclaimed a British Protectorate in 1890. The British then introduced administrative measures that altered the role of Zanzibari ulama. "From being one class of 'court scholars' they were transformed into a corps of civil servants, whose work was monitored and regulated…" See Anne K, Bang, "Intellectuals and Civil Servants: Early 20th century Zanzibar *ulama* and the Colonial State," ed., Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti *Islam in East Africa: New Sources. Archives, Manuscripts and Written Sources. Oral history. Archaeology*, (Roma: Herder, 2001), 58-98.

[20] For a thorough study on Ḥadrami ulama See Anne K. Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: The Sufi and Family Networks of Ahmad ibn Sumayt and the Tariqa 'Alawiyya in East Africa* (London: Routledge, 2003). See also Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*.

own dynasty and was subject to their own vision of a Muslim rule guided by the tenets of the Imamate. Reviving those tenets was one aim of the nineteenth and early twentieth century Omani *nahḍa*.[21]

The *nahḍa*: between Renewal and anti-Colonialism

This *nahḍa* was a religious movement associated with, if not incited by, a literary renaissance that had debuted in the late eighteenth century and was boosted by Zanzibar's printing press publishing Ibadi texts. It was part of the broader movement of religious renewal and reform that had been sweeping across the Muslim world since the eighteenth century.[22] That movement is essentially embedded in the Muslim tradition of *tajdīd* (literally renewal) which ordains that renewal and reform in Islam are to take place each century.

While the *nahḍa*, like all *tajdīd* movements in the Muslim world, was in principle a self-reflecting movement, British policy in the region nevertheless was the galvanizing factor that prompted the supporters of the *nahḍa* to implement change, by force when necessary. An increasingly vital yet constantly threatened line of communications between England and India prompted the British to become more involved in the politics of the Gulf since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Their

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[21] *Nahḍa* literally means renaissance or awakening but the use of this term in modern Omani history designates the Ibadi revival movement since the 19th century. The origin of this term is not known. Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī, the leader of the *nahḍa* at the beginning of the 20th century did not use that term in his chronicle. His son 'Abd Allah, however, labeled the movement as *al-nahḍa* -- as did other contemporary writers and historians-- and included it in the title of his chronicle of Omani 19th -20th century history. The term, however, seemed to have been in circulation since the nineteenth century as it appeared in the writings of Nāṣir al-Rawāḥī (1860-1920), a Zanzibari scholar who wrote extensively in support of the Imamate.

[22] This is not to say that there was no line of continuity, in terms of Islamic renewal and reform, between the eighteenth century and the preceding one(s). I take the eighteenth century as a starting point because it can be considered "a time of important developments which provide both a culmination for the medieval experiences of Muslims and a foundation for the modern developments… The experiences of the eighteenth century Muslims have direct ties with past and future." Levtzion and Voll, eds., *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform,* 18.

influence was consolidated in the second half of the nineteenth century under the British resident in the Persian Gulf, Edward Ross (1872-92). His major aim was the consolidation of that influence through legal treaties with the Gulf principalities, which he arranged between 1887 and 1892. Before then, a Slave Trade Treaty was signed in 1873 between the London government and those principalities, including Oman. Sayyid Sa'īd had previously been forced to sign similar treaties in 1822, 1839 and 1845 limiting the slave trade in both Oman and Zanzibar but not explicitly outlawing it as the terms of the 1873 treaty stipulated.

Traffic in slaves was throttled considerably between 1873 and 1884 but was invigorated between 1884 and 1902 when slave traders operated freely under the protection of the French flag, escaping the scrutiny of antislavery cruisers operating in the Indian Ocean. In all cases, the timing of the Treaty could not have been worse for the Omani economy, which had been given a serious blow in the 1860s as a result of the separation of Zanzibar in 1861 and the introduction of the steamer service in the Indian Ocean in 1862. The former deprived Oman of the income from the lucrative clove industry and the latter cost Muscat a two hundred year old reputation as the major commercial center of the Gulf region and the Western Indian Ocean. The Treaty only increased the dependency of al-Busa'īdīs on Britain. Not only did they become financially dependent but also politically and militarily so as the signing of the Treaty only served to fuel opposition to al-Busa'īdīs inside Oman. That opposition was to grow stiffer as a result of the British efforts to limit the lucrative arms trade that

developed between 1890 and 1912 in Muscat and accounted for more than a quarter of Muscat's import income.[23]

Thus, British political ascendancy and economic supremacy in the Indian Ocean came at the expense of gradual Omani political weakness and economic decline. This situation resulted in serious political repercussions inside Oman as it enraged Ibadi ulama, added to their resentment against their rulers and created a fertile ground for opposition movements led by those ulama to challenge and depose their British-dependent rulers. Yet in order to understand the roots of that resentment and the dynamics shaping the relationship between Omani ulama and their rulers we need to understand the doctrine of the Ibadi Imamate which outlined what expectations Ibadi ulama had from their rulers.

Ibadis regard the *imāma* (the Imamate) as the ideal organization for Muslims and they expect the Imām, leader of this community, to be a just and righteous one looking after the interests of the Muslim community. The authority of the Imām is based on his *'ilm* (knowledge) and piety and exercised through the process of consultation. His legitimacy depends largely on one main factor: his obedience to God's laws.

The aim behind the Imamate is to restore the ideal of a unified *umma,* an ideal that was shattered, in the eyes of Ibadis, since the days of both Caliphs 'Uthmān and 'Alī. Thus, the Imamate for Ibadis represents a microscopic example of the *umma*. In other words, the Imamate symbolizes Omani unity the same way the *umma*

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[23] Robert Geran Landen, *Oman since 1856: Disruptive Modernization in a Traditional Arab Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 153.

symbolizes world-wide Muslim unity.[24] The last Imamate, prior to al-Busa'īdī rule, was headed by the Ya'āriba. Their troubles with Ibadi ulama started in the early eighteenth century and reached a boiling point by the end of the same century, when chaos prevailed inside Oman and Persians occupied parts of Oman and threatened its overseas dependencies. Aḥmad al-Busa'īdī, the founder of al-Busa'īdī dynasty, came to power "as something of a saviour by getting rid of the Persians from the coast at Suhar, Muscat and eventually Julfar, and he did bring a degree of peace and considerable prosperity to his country."[25]

In 1753-4, Aḥmad was recognized by a number of Omani ulama as the Imām as was his son and successor Sa'īd, when elected in 1783. Their successors, however, did not hold the title Imām but rather that of Sultan. The difference between both titles is significant in Ibadi political theory. The Imām designates a legitimate ruler who represents the Ibadi community and who is elected or selected for his suitability to the job. 'Sultan' is a title used to refer to those who usually came to power without being conferred legitimacy from the representatives of the Ibadi community.

Who has the authority to decide who is an 'Imām' or a 'Sultan' is another controversial matter. While Aḥmad al-Busa'īdī was recognized by many as the 'Imām' he was denied that title by other ulama. The one who started the controversy was the Omani scholar Jā'id bin Abī Nabhān al-Kharūṣī. He claimed that Aḥmad was not elected as a result of prior consultation amongst Muslims as Ibadi tradition

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[24] For an analysis of the history of the Imamate in Oman see Wilkinson. *The Imamate Tradition,* al-Sālimī, *Tuhfat al-a'yān,* and Nabil Kaylani, "Politics and Religion in 'Umān: A Historical Overview," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10(1979): 567-579, and For more information on the Ibadi imamate, see Elizabeth Savage, *A Gateway to Hell, A Gateway to Paradise: the North African Response to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1997).

[25] Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition,* 226.

dictated and that the few who elected him did not represent the whole Ibadi community.[26] Not all ulama agreed with Abī Nabhān as they thought of Aḥmad as a suitable ruler who united their country and respected the Sharī'a. His behavior and conduct entitled him to be an Imām, whether there was an agreement on the validity of the procedure through which he was elected or not.[27] Strong leadership that provided stability and prosperity proved to be a priority for many ulama; even the critical Abī Nabhān was ultimately satisfied. However, only Imām Aḥmad and his son Sulṭān held the title Imām and rarely was it used later in reference to al-Busa'īdī rulers who were rather called Sultans.

The controversy over the title and the legitimacy notwithstanding, al-Busa'īdīs continued to enjoy the support of several influential Omani ulama. Even Sayyid Sa'īd who managed to create several enemies among Ibadi ulama still enjoyed wide support since not only did he keep Oman united but also expanded its rule. As previously mentioned, Sayyid Sa'īd surrounded himself with ulama, and the company of Nāṣir al-Kharūsī, Abī Nabhān's son, and his residency in Zanzibar must have provided much legitimacy not only to Sa'īd but also to his expansion policy.

Yet this relation between al-Busa'īdīs and Ibadi ulama was to take a tragic turn after the death of Sayyid Sa'īd. The succession dispute between Sayyid Sa'īd's two sons, resulting in the separation of Zanzibar from Oman, highlighted the increasing British influence in the region, a factor that contributed to the growing resentment of Ibadi ulama. The intervention of a European power and its successful attempt to break the Omani dynasty apart sent a clear message to Ibadi ulama that their rulers were in

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[26] See Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-a`yān bi sīrat ahl `Umān* (The Noble Elite in the History of Oman) (Al-Sīb: Maktabat al-Imām Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī, n. d.), 185-202.
[27] Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, 172.

no position to protect Oman. In fact, the separation of Zanzibar from Oman further separated the Ibadi ulama from their rulers whose ineptitude now categorized several of them, in the eyes of Ibadi ulama, as *jabābira*.[28] The term *jabābira*, which literally means tyrants, has a specific meaning in Ibadi legal context. It designates rulers who do not apply the Sharī'a or do not govern in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunna. In short, they are those who do not fit in the category of Imāms. As Wilkinson has observed: "the genuine *jabābira* often has the overtones of local rulers operating under foreign influence: the Al Bu Sa'īd in the nineteenth century, for example."[29] The primary aim of the Omani *nahḍa* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, therefore, was to restore the Imamate to its ideal task and fend off any foreign intervention.

The Separation of Zanzibar and its Repercussions

It had been Sayyid Sa'īd's custom to appoint two members of his family as his deputies in both the African and the Asian parts of his dynasty. This was an administrative arrangement that enabled Sa'īd to manage his vast domains. His son Thuwaynī was appointed deputy of Oman in 1833 and his son Mājid deputy of Zanzibar in 1854. On his way back to Zanzibar from a trip to Oman, Sayyid Sa'īd died at sea in October 1856. Soon after his death was announced, both of his sons and deputies, Mājid and Thuwaynī, declared themselves legitimate heirs. Thuwaynī's claim was based on the fact that he was the oldest son of Sa'īd, that he was more experienced, and that he had received the pledge of Omani tribes who, in the words of

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[28] Al-Sālimī, for example, did not use the term *jabābira* to describe any of the Busa'īdī rulers. He only used the term *bughāt* (aggressors, unjust…) to describe Sultan Turkī and his followers in their war against Imam 'Azzān bin Qays. 'Azzān and his supporters, however, described Sultan Salem and his followers as *jabābira*. See al-Sālimī, *Tuhfat al-a'yān*, 294-295 for the description of the war between Sultan Turkī and 'Azzān and see Ibid., 261-262 for the context in which the term *jabābira* was used.

[29] Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, 191.

Coupland, "regarded Arab East Africa as, so to speak, a colonial area over which the motherland should enforce its authority."[30] Mājid's claim was based on the fact that his father had ruled Oman from Zanzibar, and that as his deputy on Zanzibar, he was more eligible to succeed him.[31]

The dispute was then resolved peacefully due to the intercession of their cousin Muḥammad bin Sālim, who was sent by Thuwaynī to conclude an agreement. Mājid consented to pay Thuwaynī an annual sum of 40.000 Maria Theresa Dollars -- subsidy paid by Zanzibar for Oman to compensate for loss of revenues as a result of the separation -- if Thuwaynī would abandon any claim to Zanzibar. Thuwaynī felt compelled to agree since his internal problems had been accumulating. His brother Turkī had taken over Suḥar, the Wahhabis had control over Buraymi, and in addition, tribal upheavals in the Interior of Oman were increasing. Conflict with Mājid surfaced again after one year, when Mājid refused to pay Thuwaynī the sum agreed upon. It is not clear what prompted Mājid to breach the agreement but it could have been because each of them could interpret the agreement differently. Thuwaynī considered the payment an act of submission from his brother, who, in turn, thought of it an aid from a rich brother to a poorer one.[32] Or, more likely, Mājid simply took advantage of the deteriorating economic and political situation in Oman and the inability of Thuwaynī to successfully solve his problems.

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[30] Coupland, *The Exploitation of East Africa*, 15.
[31] Jamāl Zakariyya Qāsim. *Dawlat al-Busa'īd fī 'Umān wa sharq afrīqiyā: mundhu ta'sīsiha wa ḥatta nihāyat ḥukmiha fī Zanjubār wa bidāyat 'ahdiha al-jadīd fī 'Umān (1741-1970)* (Al-Busa'idi Dynasty in Oman and East Africa: From its origins until the end of its rule in Zanzibar and its new era in Oman (Al-'Ayn: Markaz Zāyed li al-Turāth wa al-Tārīkh, 2000), 236-238.
[32] Ibid., 242.

It took Thuwaynī a year to secure the support of tribes from the interior and to then move against Mājid. He sailed for Zanzibar in March 1859 with about two thousand five hundred armed men. However, he was stopped by the British and was ordered back to Muscat. Thuwaynī, under threat, retreated. He was ordered to sign a pledge to accept the British as intermediary in solving the succession dispute and to accept their final recommendation. Thuwaynī refused, however, to accept in advance that the British could determine the outcome. Nevertheless, in May 1861, the British recommended through the Canning Award, (named after the arbitrator Lord Canning, Governor-General of India) that Zanzibar and Muscat be separated. The main reasons laid out by the British were that this could promote security in the region and most importantly, break up an Islamic empire in the Indian Ocean.[33] Breaking up the empire would weaken al-Busa'īdīs and consequently enable the British in the future to negotiate or even order the abolition of the slave trade in the Red Sea – which they did in 1873.

The Award was ratified in 1862 by the French and the British guaranteeing the independence of both Zanzibar and Oman.[34] The British success, however, reached beyond breaking up an empire or aspiring to abolish the slave trade in the Red Sea.[35] The Award allowed the British to exercise a policy of 'indirect rule' in Oman and Zanzibar. On the one hand, the British pledged to protect Zanzibar, thereby rendering it a dependency well before it became a protectorate in 1890. On the other hand, the

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[33] Ghubash, *Oman*, 176.

[34] Sultān bin Muḥammad al-Qāsimī went as far as considering British success in dividing the Omani dynasty to be equal to their colonization of India. See Sulṭān bin Muḥammad al-Qāsimī. *Taqsīm al-imbraṭuriyya al-'umāniyya: 1856-1862* (*Dividing the Omani Empire: 1856-1862*) (Dubai: Mu'assasat al-Bayān, 1989), 8.

[35] For more information see Suzanne Miers, *Britain and the Ending of the Slave Trade* (London: Longman, 1975).

British also claimed the right to approve the succession of any ruler in Oman. Otherwise, he would be denied the Zanzibari subsidy, on which the weak Omani economy heavily depended.

For the Ibadi ulama in both Oman and Zanzibar, whose ideology revolved around the establishment of a puritanical Muslim society headed by a just Imām ruling in accordance with the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunna, this new role for the 'Christian' power in the region added insult to injury. The al-Busa'īdī dynasty might not have been the ideal Imamate Ibadis venerated but it was at least a rule they could tolerate. This new situation was unthinkable for true believers and their ulama. Ulama in both Oman and Zanzibar were engaged in a long polemic debating whether the Sultan had any legal or juristic right, from the Sharī'a perspective, to divide the dynasty. But it was obvious for them that it was not their Sultans who had the final decision in this matter. It was the British. "The essential issue," Ghubash commented, "resided in the fact that the partition was not according to the will of the Sultan, but to British strategic exigencies only."[36]

In Zanzibar, neither the British decision to break up the dynasty nor British presence and influence went unchallenged. Barghash sought local support from the powerful and majority Ḥirth confederation who had denounced the separation, and attempted a coup against his brother Mājid in anticipation of the arrival of Thuwyanī.[37] The two most important Ḥirth persons around Barghash were Shaykh

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[36] Ghubash, *Oman*, 176.

[37] The Hirth confederation, very influential in Zanzibar, was a branch of the Hinā'ī or Hināwī tribes that included, in addition to the Ḥirth, prestigious tribes such as al-Barwānī, al-Maskarī, Ghuyūth, Ḥubūs... Coupland stated that those Hirth rebels were already in touch with friends of Muscat and that Barghash himself had received a heavy bribe from Thuwaynī, probably to assist him in his uprising. See Coupland, *The Exploitation of East Africa*, 18.

Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī al-Ḥārthī and Shaykh 'Abd Allah bin Sālim al-Barwānī, who, according to al-Mughayrī, had always supported Thuwaynī.[38] There is good reason to believe that Barghash was either acting on behalf of Thuwaynī or was at least willing to acknowledge him as Sultan of Oman and Zanzibar.[39] In any case, in the eyes of Arabs in Zanzibar, Barghash symbolized 'the opposition' to Mājid and to the latter's patrons the British. His open animosity toward the British led Captain Christopher Palmer Rigby to comment: "This Barghash is a sullen, morose, discontented character. He has never called on me, and detests all Europeans..."[40] Thuwaynī's failure to make it to Zanzibar encouraged Barghash to continue with his plan to dethrone his brother Mājid. The open rebellion he declared in October 1859 was crushed by the British. Barghash was exiled to India, pledging not to interfere in Zanzibari affairs in future. Those who aided Barghash were pardoned by Mājid. There were two important exceptions -- Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī and Sālim al-Barwānī -- who could not be tolerated by either Mājid or the British. The latter was exiled to Lamu where he died;[41] the former was forced to leave Zanzibar for Somalia, where he stayed for two years. He made a brief return to Zanzibar before his final departure to Oman.[42] Following the failed coup, Mājid tried

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[38] al-Mughayrī, *Juhaynat al-akhbār*, 295. Al-Fārisī adopted the classical unchallenged view that interprets Omani history in terms of conflicts between the two rival tribes the Hinā'is and the Ghāfiris to explain the reason behind the Ḥirth support for Barghash. In this case, this view can be challenged by the fact that the Ḥirth in Zanzibar were far more powerful than the Ghāfiris. Besides, there is the strong case of the twentieth century *nahḍa* that enjoyed the support of both tribes. 'Ali Muḥsin al-Barwānī denounced such an analysis and explained Barghash's coup as an attempt to resist the British decision and reunite with Oman. See Ali Muhsin al-Barwani, *Conflicts and Harmony in Zanzibar* (Memoirs) (n.p, n. d.), 14. Al-Barwānī commented the following on Barghash's movement: "The truth of the matter was that this was a Zanzibari-Omani patriotic movement to frustrate international colonialism of 'divide and rule', and the leader was Sayyid Barghash. " Ibid.

[39] Ghubash, *Oman*, 183.

[40] Quoted in Coupland, *The Exploitation of East Africa*, 18.

[41] Al-Barwānī reported that 'Abd Allah, his great grandfather, was probably poisoned by the order of Mājid. See al-Barwani, *Conflicts and Harmony*, 15. The same allegation is found in Coupland as well. See Coupland, *The Exploitation of East Africa*, 32.

[42] Al-Mughayrī, *Juhaynat al-akhbār*, 300.

to restrict movement between Zanzibar and Oman; he was especially concerned about that Omani support for Thuwaynī and his supporters who remained inside Zanzibar.[43]

In Oman, Thuwaynī was killed by his son Sālim who then succeeded him. He was surrounded by the Imamites (supporters of the establishment of the Imamate), who had their own reasons not to regret Thuwaynī's death because he failed to consolidate Omani power. Prominent among those surrounding Sālim were the aforementioned Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī and the prestigious scholar and influential ideologue in nineteenth century Oman, Sa'īd bin Khalfān al-Khalīlī. The Ibadi ulama were willing to support any ruler in Muscat as long as he conformed to their views on what should constitute a healthy and acceptable rule. Sālim could not satisfy the hardliner al-Khalīlī whose life-long task had been to establish what he envisioned as the true Ibadi Imamate. He was even known to have been involved in one incident where he supported one of Sayyid Sa'īd's rivals in a bid to replace him.[44] Despite the fact that Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī provided Sālim with invaluable support when the latter's uncle Turkī rose against him in the summer of 1867, Sālim attempted to arrest him. He might have suspected Ṣāliḥ had secret ties with Turkī. Thus, the alliance between the Imamites and Sālim came to an end. As of summer 1868, they started to build a coalition to oust the Sultan and restore the Imamate system. Ṣāliḥ bin 'Ali and al-Khalīlī, representing the Hinā'ī tribes and the Ibadi ulama respectively, built an alliance with 'Azzān bin Qays al-Busa'īdī, governor of Rustaq, the traditional fortress of conservative Ibadi scholarship and power.

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[43] Those restrictions were lifted when Barghash was allowed to return to Zanzibar and to succeed his brother to the throne. Al-Mughayrī, *Juhaynat al-akhbār*, 300.
[44] Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, 231-233.

'Azzān represented the Qays branch of al-Busa'īdī family. Qays was the son of Imām Aḥmad, the founder of the al-Busa'īdī dynasty. He had lost the competition over the throne to his brother Sulṭān (r.1793-1804) whose descendants had won the leadership of the Omani dynasty. Thus, 'Azzān was a suitable choice of the Imamites to lead their movement because of his good reputation, his lineage and his personal belief in the Imamate system. Bin 'Alī, al-Khalīlī and 'Azzān were the three 'pillars' of the Imamate movement in addition to Shaykh Muḥammad bin Salmān al-Ghārbī.

Between September and October 1868, Muscat and Matrah fell to 'Azzān's advancing troops. Their victory in Muscat symbolized the revival of the Imamate and it was at this point that the leaders of this movement summoned and elected 'Azzān their Imām. To announce their victory, a letter was dispatched by Imām al-Khalīlī to the Ibadis in the Maghrib informing them of their success in overthrowing the *jabābira* 'who had spoiled the country and ruled in an unjust manner'.[45] 'Azzān and his supporters had four main aims: centralize their power, liberate al-Buraymi from the Wahhabis, put an end to British influence, and retake Zanzibar.[46]

'Azzān could only achieve one aim, which was to centralize power. He could neither put an end to British influence nor reunite with Zanzibar. And the Wahhabi threat did not fade. The British did not recognize him as a ruler of Oman and hence denied him the Zanzibari subsidy. It was instead used by Mājid to finance his brother

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[45] 'Ubaydalī Aḥmad, *Al-Imām 'Azzān bin Qays, 1868-1871: jawānib min al-tārīkh al-'arabī al-islāmī fī ẓill al-haymana al-urūbiyyah.*(Imam 'Azzān bin Qays, 1868-1871: Aspects of the Arab-Islamic History under European Domination) (Beirut: dār al-ḥadātha, 1983), 95-96. See also al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-a'yān.*

[46] 'Azzān was not alone in entertaining the idea of reuniting the two parts of the previous dynasty. Mājid seemed to have been willing to take advantage of the revolution in Oman to restore his family's right to the throne in Muscat. This prompted Sir John Kirk, then acting consul in Zanzibar to make it "plainly understood that no such adventure could be tolerated by the Indian Government." Coupland, *The Exploitation of East Africa,* 76.

Turkī, a rival of 'Azzān, in order to launch an attack on the Imamate. The series of attacks led by Turkī, in addition to a crippling economy, brought an end to the Imamate which survived for two years and a few months.

After the fall of 'Azzān's Imamate, Sultan Turkī ascended the throne. He was probably the staunchest enemy Imamites had to deal with in the nineteenth century. They tried to oust him three times after the 'Azzān Imamate collapsed in 1871 only to be repelled by British gunboats. The first attack on Muscat and Matraḥ was led by Ṣāliḥ bin 'Ali in June 1877. Ṣāliḥ was so determined to get rid of Turkī that he financed the attack by mortgaging his personal property. Although Ṣāliḥ had always been driven by his own beliefs in restoring the Imamate, Ṣāliḥ's determination this time was further fueled by his desire to avenge al-Khalīlī's and his son's death at the hands of Turkī.[47] Ṣāliḥ took over Matraḥ but was unable to subdue Muscat after the arrival of the British gunboat H.M.S. Theresa that shelled his troops and forced them to retreat. Ṣāliḥ tried again in 1875 and in 1883 but without success due to the repeated intervention of British gunboats.

The British were determined to protect Turkī as much as he was determined to protect their interests in Oman. Turkī "proved a willing tool of the British: it was during his rule that a system of British tutelage which amounted to indirect rule matured in Oman."[48] In fact, it was under Turkī that the British Resident Edward Ross started to discuss the idea of declaring Oman, along with Zanzibar, a protectorate. The idea of an Omani protectorate, however, never materialized due to the Anglo-French

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[47] 'Abd Allah al-Sālimī, the chronicler of the twentieth century *nahḍa* and son of Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī, cited revenge for al-Khalīlī and his son as the main reason behind Ṣāliḥ's offensive against Turkī. See 'Abd Allah al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān bi ḥurriyyat 'umān* (The Rise of the Nobles for the Freedom of Oman) (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1998), 64.

[48] Landen, *Oman since 1856*, 202.

Declaration signed back in 1862 guaranteeing Omani independence.[49] Instead, an Anglo-Omani Commercial Treaty and non-alienation Agreement was signed in March 1891 with Sultan Fayṣal who succeeded his father Turkī in 1888. The terms of that Treaty – that included extraterritorial privileges for the British and a secret bond granting the British exclusive control over Oman's foreign relations -- guaranteed Britain a "quasi-protectorate in Oman where her influence was 'paramount' but not 'exclusive'."[50]

It is difficult to know exactly what Omanis in Zanzibar thought of 'Azzān's movement and subsequent events.[51] The fact that Mājid was very hostile to 'Azzān and his rule and that Mājid's opposition had gone underground after the failure of Barghash's coup attempt leaves no doubt that sympathy for 'Azzān's Imamate could not have been strongly voiced. We do know that many Omanis on the neighboring island Pemba remained wholeheartedly supportive of the Imamites in Oman, even after their political defeat in 1871. For example, in 1878, in the midst of hostilities between Sultan Turkī and the Imamites, they organized a fundraising campaign to collect money for Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī, despite the fact that Barghash --who had succeeded Mājid in 1870 -- warned them not to do so. The money never reached Ṣāliḥ since Turkī seized it upon arrival to Oman and did not return it to Pemba 'fundraisers' until later.[52]

Barghash's position regarding the Ibadi movement in Oman was ambiguous. On one hand, his return to Zanzibar marked the return of his favorite allies the Ḥirth;

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[49] This Declaration was crafted by Calcutta, London and France, ratifying the Canning Award and guarantying the independence of both Oman and Zanzibar. Landen, *Oman since 1856,* 200.
[50] Ibid., 223.
[51] The difficulty is due to lack of sources on the period.
[52] Al-Mughayrī, *Juhaynat al-akhbār,* 346-7.

but they were also allies of 'Azzān in Oman. He allied himself from the outset with Omanis in Zanzibar whom the British identified as the 'opposition' and as an 'ultra-fanatic party'. "To begin with it was clear that Barghash for whatever reason was hand in glove with the Mlawas"[53], commented Coupland. He showed complete disregard for British policies in Zanzibar and managed almost to rupture his relations with British consul, Churchill. Barghash went as far to repudiate his recent undertakings on completing the abolition of the slave trade, thereby betraying the British confidence in his support for this endeavor which had helped place him on the throne in the first place.[54]

On the other hand, the fact that 'Azzān was the leader of this Imamate movement posed serious problems for Barghash. 'Azzān belonged to the rival Qays branch of al-Busa'īdī family.[55] It was one thing to ally himself with his brother Thuwaynī in an attempt to prevent the breakup of al-Busa'īdī dynasty; it was quite another to support a rival who, if successful in reuniting Zanzibar and Oman, might marginalize Barghash or even depose him.[56] This became clear to the Sultan upon

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[53] Coupland, *The Exploitation of East A frica*, 91. Coupland used the term 'Mlawas' to refer to conservative Ibadis.

[54] When asked by Churchill to consider a new slave abolition treaty Barghash answered him with a cold message: "You propose that we should send someone to you to discuss with you the terms of a new treaty; but it is unnecessary to discuss the one actually in existence, and the trouble resulting therefrom is quite enough for us and more than enough." Ibid., 93.

[55] Contrary to Pouwels's claim, it is hard to say that Barghash was supporting the 'fundamentalists' in Oman at that time. See Pouwels, *Horn and* Crescent, 205.

[56] It is well-known that Barghash was very joyous upon hearing the news of 'Azzān's death. According to al-Sālimī, he ordered to fire one hundred and one shells as a sign of celebration. The reason for P rghash's joy, as al-Sālimī claimed, was that he had feared the loss of his rule when the *Imamate* of 'Azzān was established. This implies that 'Azzān was not to abandon Zanzibar but rather reunite it with the *Imamate* in Oman. That same year Zanzibar suffered from a violent tornado that uprooted many of its clove trees. Al-Sālimī considered this as a punishment from God for celebrating 'Azzān's death and stated that when Barghash took refuge in a mosque during the tornado, some approached him and warned the Sultan that "this [the tornado] was in return for the one hundred and one shells." See al-Sālimī, *tuhfat al-a'yān*, vol.2, 301 and al-Mughayrī, *Juhaynat al-akhbār*, 340. Whether this was actually said or not, it nevertheless indicates that 'Azzān did in fact enjoy some support on the island.

receiving a series of letters from Oman. One of them warned Barghash to make peace "with our Lord the Imam. If you bind yourself to follow the Imam," the letter went on, he will continue the kingdom to you; but if you deny him, he will take it from you."[57] It is doubtful that Barghash could trust the offer of 'continuing the kingdom' to him. Barghash's fears might have increased upon receiving a more alarming letter from one of his brothers allied to 'Azzān, bluntly telling him that "Zanzibar is the fountain of money and we cannot get on without Zanzibar... I have drawn on you for the sum of 5.000 dollars: pay it at once... you have been my agent of old and are so still, nothing more: so do not make a big man of yourself..."[58] Not only was Barghash certain that the British would never tolerate an alliance with the Imamate, let alone a reunion, he was sure that if an alliance ever took place he would most probably come out of it empty handed.

Although Barghash did not lend his support to the Imamate movement, modern Ibadi renaissance and its ulama owed much to him. Beside his charisma, shrewdness, popularity and drive to modernize his country, he was known for his piety and high respect for scholars. Al-Mughayrī, who described him as the last true Sultan in Zanzibar, provided full details about his daily routine, of which his privileged ulama and close confidents occupied much space.[59] The only group of people Barghash could not get along with were those who were very close to his brother Mājid such as Muḥammad bin 'Abd Allah al-Shaqṣī and Sulaymān bin 'Alī al-Darmakī, the latter being identified by Churchill as a 'friend of England's'.[60]

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[57] Coupland, *The Exploitation of East A frica*, 98.
[58] The excerpt from the letter is quoted in Coupland. Ibid.
[59] Al-Mughayrī, *Juhaynat al-akhbār*, 346-7.
[60] Ibid., and Coupland, *The Exploitation of East Africa*, 92.

As previously mentioned, Barghash's role in aiding Ibadi revival was not restricted to his veneration of ulama. Under his rule, the press was introduced and it printed a collection of Ibadi religious texts such as *Qāmūs al-Sharī`a* (The Dictionary of the Shari'a) by the Omani scholar Jumayyil ibn Khamīs al-Sa'dī,[61] in addition to literary texts, providing Ibadis with the tools necessary to spread religious education and revive their heritage. Barghash also bought two steamships to take people from Oman and Zanzibar to the pilgrimage every year. Despite the fact that he was antagonistic and suspicious of 'Azzān, he allowed several of his supporters after the defeat of the movement to escape to Zanzibar, where they resided. Among those who came was Sālim ibn 'Udayyim, whose name appeared along with that of 'Azzān and 'Alī and al-Ghārbī as signatories of the letter sent by Imām al-Khalīlī to Maghribi ulama, breaking the news about 'Azzān's victory.[62]

When Barghash died in 1888 his son Khālid claimed the throne but was blocked by the British who did not trust his loyalty and suspected him of harboring strong anti-British feelings. Upon the advice of some Omani notables, Khālid left the palace and the British asked Khalīfa to succeed Barghash. Khalīfa was followed by 'Alī and then Ḥamad. But Ḥamad (r. 1893-96) was not exactly what the British had expected. He was in favor of reuniting Oman and Zanzibar and was surrounded by Omani advisors who strongly supported this idea. His closest advisor, Shaykh Hilāl bin 'Āmir bin Sultān al-Khinjarī was the most prominent among them. A delegation was sent to Oman on behalf of Ḥamad, not to meet Sultan Fayṣal in Muscat, but to meet his opponent Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī to discuss details about this reunion plan. Ṣāliḥ sent

[61] This collection was originally in 90 volumes but only 17 volumes were published during Barghash's rule. See Al-Khalīlī, "Al-'umāniyyūn wa atharuhum", 184.
[62] Al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-a'yān*, vol.2, 262-63.

back another delegation, headed by his son 'Abd Allah and accompanied by Hināwī chiefs, to further elaborate on Ḥamad's plan. The result of this meeting, as al-Mughayrī outlined it, was to launch an attack on Muscat – an attack to be financed by Ḥamad himself--, oust Faysal and reunite the two sides of the former dynasty under the leadership of Ḥamad. By the time the British learnt of Ḥamad's plan, it was too late. Necessary financial and military aid had already reached Oman. The attack on Muscat was launched in January 1895, led by Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī's son, 'Abd Allah. The offensive lasted twenty two days and was initially successful in capturing Muscat.[63] The British, whose relations with Faysal had severely deteriorated, chose not to intervene on his behalf. For reasons that are not very clear, they maintained strict neutrality. Faysal, aided by the Hināwis' rivals, the Ghāfiris, launched a counter-attack, followed by negotiations in March 1895 that resulted in restoring Faysal's rule and pardoning Ṣāliḥ and his associates.

The British believed it was Ḥamad's closest advisor, al-Khinjarī, who was behind the scheme of the reunion. They asked Ḥamad to arrest him; when he ignored their request, they did so themselves and sent him into exile to Oman.[64] Al-Khinjarī, however, was only one of many inside Zanzibar who remained resentful toward the British. This deep resentment was to resurface the following year. Ḥamad, nearing his death, -- and in what seems to be a decision aimed at defying the British -- called upon Khālid bin Barghash, who had been blocked earlier from ascending the throne, to succeed him. When Ḥamad died on August 25, 1896, Khālid quickly declared himself

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[63] Al-Mughayrī. *Juhaynat al-akhbār*, 377-78.

[64] The British were very suspicious of al-Khinjarī, who they believed, had a major role in shaping internal policies as well as Ḥamad's anti-British attitude. According to al-Mughayrī, this was very true, and al-Khinjarī had the final say in Ḥamad's inner circle, Ibid.

Sultan. To underscore his challenge to the British, Khālid and his supporters held a coronation ceremony and raised the red Zanzibari flag on top of the palace.[65] Khālid fortified his palace in anticipation of British retribution by surrounding it with canons and soldiers. He sent letters to European consuls warning that any interference on their part would be met by force. The British response was immediate. They demanded Khālid leave the Palace by 9:00am, August 27, 1896, and lower the flag; otherwise his palace would be bombarded. Khālid ignored the ultimatum and raised the flag even higher in defiance. At the stated hour, British warships bombarded the palace and its surroundings in an unprecedented show of force. Zanzibari defense collapsed due to heavy shelling and Khālid's soldiers retreated. Khālid managed to escape from his palace and took refuge at the German embassy. The Germans refused to hand him over to the British and sent him to Dar es Salaam, where he stayed until the British took over Dar es-Salaam during World War I. He was then exiled to Seychelles.[66]

Khālid's insurgency was a very significant event in Zanzibari history. On the one hand, it uncovered the level of dissatisfaction among Zanzibaris, especially the Omani elite, toward British influence and policy. Ḥamad's attempt to reunite Zanzibar with Oman and his calculated decision to call upon the anti-British Khālid to succeed him were meant to show resolve vis-à-vis the British. The support Khālid received from Omanis and others was very genuine and his popularity soared among the Zanzibari population by his acts of defiance. Even al-Mughayrī, a close friend and

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[65] The red flag was a symbol of al-Busa'īdī dynasty. It was also used in Oman. When 'Azzān's troops triumphed in Muscat in 1868, they raised the white flag in defiance of Sultan Sālim. See al-Sālimī, *Tuhfat al-A'yān,* vol.2, 290-1.

[66] Later, he, as well as Muslim Indians from the Transvaal, petitioned the British and Sultan Khalīfa bin Ḥārib to permit him to come back to Zanzibar. A compromise was reached allowing him refuge in Mombassa, where he died in June 25, 1926. Al-Mughayrī. *Juhaynat al-akhbār,* 380-86.

admirer of the British, commented that: "There is no doubt that Arabs in general liked Sayyid Khālid a lot. Even Swahilis admired him and wished he would rule."[67] Al-Mughayrī's reference to the Swahilis being supportive of Khālid is significant. They bore allegiance to a ruler best known for his anti-British stand. Khālid's stand must have reflected that of the wider Zanzibari society, not only that of his Omani supporters.

Close scrutiny of those who stood with Khālid is revealing. Among them were two of his father Barghash's close confidents such as Muḥammad bin Sulaymān al-Mandhirī and Sayf bin 'Alī bin 'Āmir al-Maskarī. Sālim al-Barwānī, whose father 'Abd Allah had been involved in Barghash's earlier insurrection was also present. Thus, a number of high-profile Arabs in Zanzibar remained antagonistic to the British presence and displayed their feelings when Khālid provided them with the opportunity to do so.

On the other hand, this battle that lasted only twenty five minutes sent a strong message to Zanzibaris: the British would not tolerate rebellion and were willing to use maximum force against anyone who defied them. This seemed to have been a lesson Zanzibari Sultans learned. Khālid's open rebellion was the last military undertaking by Zanzibari Sultans.

To curb any lingering influence of those involved in the insurrection, the British prosecuted them. Some, such as al-Barwānī, al-Mandhirī, al-Maskarī and Sayf bin Sa'ūd al-Khinjarī, were jailed and then released after paying a heavy fine. One member of the prominent al-Maskarī family, Ṣāliḥ, had all his properties confiscated

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[67] Ibid., 388.

after he refused to pay the British any fine.[68] Others were released and were allowed to leave for Oman – a mistake on the part of the British, for they quickly added to the anti-British resentment already growing there. Many of those who ended up in Oman chose to support the Imamites who, between the 1890s and 1913, were re-organizing themselves in a preparation for a bigger offensive – one that marked another phase of the modern Ibadi *nahḍa*.

The second *nahḍa* in Oman

The second phase of the *nahḍa* that culminated in the restoration of the Imamate in 1913 highlights the continuous grievances that mobilized Ibadis against their rulers in Oman. While the partition of the dynasty had become a *fait accompli* for the new generation leading the second *nahḍa*, the reasons behind this partition, that is British influence and the weakness of Omani Sultans, continued to generate grievance and motivate resistance. The Zanzibari factor might not have been as prominent in the second *nahḍa* as it was in the first but the impact of the movement on Omanis in Zanzibar and the support it received was significant. Thus, it is necessary to sketch the development of the second *nahḍa* led by al-Sālimī and outline its rationale rooted in antagonism toward ascending 'Christian' influence and in the failure of Omani rulers to live up to the ideals of the Imamate in order to understand the broader political and intellectual currents to which the Omani elite in Zanzibar was exposed.

Turkī was succeeded by his son Faysal (r.1888-1913) who at the beginning of his rule intended to reverse his father Turkī's pro-British policies. His intentions were known to the Imamites who first rallied behind him for support. The first step he took was to dismiss his father's pro-British minister Sa'īd bin Muḥammad, a person much

[68] Ibid., 388-9

resented by Imamites and equally favored by the British. Nothing drew the Imamites closer to Fayṣal than his refusal to co-operate with the British on the issue of slave trade abolition. As previously discussed, the trade was revived between 1884 and 1902 and Fayṣal was ignoring British demands to tighten the screws on it. Thus, Fayṣal appeared in the eyes of the Imamites as someone willing to turn his back on the British and ignore their orders; as a result he was seen as worthy of their support. Under these circumstances, Fayṣal's decision to call himself 'Imām' rather than the customary 'Sultan' and to use that title on minted coins was both symbolic and deliberate. Not only did the Ibadi ulama not object to the use of this highly venerated title in Oman, Ibadis from Algeria and Egypt also recognized his title in referring to him as the Imām of Muscat and Oman.[69]

This initial willingness to act independently of the British was not enough to satisfy the Imamites. His inability to arbitrate between fighting Omani tribes and to extend his control over the interior of Oman made him look very vulnerable. Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī's appeal to Fayṣal to intervene between the tribes went unanswered. Ṣāliḥ was soon to denounce him.[70] The first attempt to oust him came in 1895, when Sultan Ḥamad of Zanzibar financed the attack led by Ṣāliḥ and supervised by Ḥamad's advisor al-Khinjarī. Fayṣal barely escaped when Ṣāliḥ's troops triumphantly entered Muscat and the red flag of al-Busa'īdī dynasty was replaced again by the white banner of the Imamate. Fayṣal managed to conclude a peace treaty with Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī through his son 'Abd Allah and Ṣāliḥ's troops retreated outside Muscat.

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[69] Ibid. Muscat and Oman was the official name given to the whole Omani region until 1920.
[70] Ibid., 290-292.

The British, dissatisfied with Faysal who had not shown willingness to cooperate with them, did not intervene on his behalf. This, they thought, would teach Faysal a good lesson in obedience. But now that Faysal was able to pacify his rivals, he became even more determined to slip out from under British dominance. Faysal's confidence stemmed from the fact that the French had come more closely onto the Omani scene after they opened their embassy in Muscat in 1894. The French had made previous attempts in the 1880s to get involved in Omani affairs, stimulating Britain to conclude exclusive treaties with the various Gulf principalities in 1892. Unwillingly, the British provided Faysal with the opportunity to flirt with the French when the British refused to offer him military aid during the attack launched by the Imamites in February-March 1895. The French offered that aid instead though it came too late.

This show of good will on behalf of the French ushered in a new phase in the relationship between Oman and France that lasted for four years and culminated in an agreement to grant the French a coaling permission in Muscat in 1898. This agreement infuriated the British and added to their strained relations with Faysal who had refused in that same year to fire the customary salute on Queen Victoria's birthday.[71] Thus, in a very humiliating gesture, high profile British officials ordered Faysal to come on board a British warship in February 1899 with its canons pointing at his castle and forced him to annul the coaling permission or face an unavoidable punishment. Faysal had no choice but to agree. To further cripple him, the British withheld the Zanzibari subsidy. Faysal learnt his lesson and from then on worked to restore good relations

[71] Ibid.

with his superiors. He showed good faith by first reinstating ex-minister Sa'īd bin Muḥammad and by co-operating fully on the abolition of the slave trade.

By damaging Faysal's prestige and forcing him to co-operate fully, the British destroyed whatever credibility he had retained in the eyes of the Imamites. Yet, the Imamites continued to make efforts to win him back to their cause. One of those who approached Faysal was the renowned scholar al-Sālimī. Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī was the most prominent *'ālim* of his time and the man at the center of this *nahḍa*. He was born between 1869 and 1870 in a small town near al-Rustāq, where he received a traditional religious education. He was blinded at the age of twelve. He moved to al-Rustāq, the traditional Ibadi scholarly center, where he stayed for twenty two years. Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī's reputation as an *'ālim* and a leader drew al-Sālimī to al-Sharqiyya region, where he stayed in Ṣāliḥ's company for six years.[72] After Ṣāliḥ's death, al-Sālimī was recognized as his scholarly heir *par excellence*. Al-Sālimī's reputation as a knowledgeable and pious *'ālim* earned him the respect of Omanis and their leaders and drew many students to his circle of learning. Among them were the two future Imāms of Oman, Imām Sālim bin Rāshid al-Kharūṣī and Imām Muḥammad bin 'Abd Allah al-Khalīlī. Al-Sālimī was a prolific writer who left numerous publications that covered various aspects of the religious sciences: unity, jurisprudence, exegesis, dogma, Arabic language, in addition to his collection of *fatwas*. He was also recognized as a chronicler of Omani history after the publication of his book *Tuhfat al-a'yān*. Al-Sālimī died in January 1914.

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[72] Al-Sālimī, in his *Tuhfa*, used the term 'shaykhuna' (our Shaykh) to refer exclusively to Ṣāliḥ bin 'Ali. This displays the influence and prestige Ṣāliḥ enjoyed among Ibadi 'Ulama. See al-Sālimī, *Tuhfat al-a'yān*, vol.2, 304.

Al-Sālimī, like several Omani ulama, rallied at first behind Faysal. Following the step of other Imamites, he was soon to abandon Faysal and then turn into his worst enemy. In 1902, al-Sālimī's relationship with Faysal reached a boiling stage when the Sultan permitted Sir Percy Cox, the British agent in Muscat, to check the coal mines near Sur. Al-Sālimī voiced his strong opposition to what he thought was a clear attempt on behalf of the British to infiltrate further into the country. He aroused Omanis against this visit. They responded by making a stand off with Cox when he showed up at the mines. The crowd fired at one of Cox's companions and killed him.[73]

A death threat to al-Sālimī emanated from Faysal's palace regarding al-Sālimī's role in that incident. Al-Sālimī's reaction to the threat appeared in one of his poems. In that poem, al-Sālimī first ridiculed the death threat since "death was inevitable and even preferable to a feeling of humiliation from the present situation in Oman".[74] He reminded his opponents that he was honoring his Arab roots by choosing death over life and honor over shame. This, he continued, would remind 'them', i.e Europeans, of everything they had read about Arabs and about their honor, and would confirm to 'them' that Arabs had not changed. Meanwhile, by doing what he did, al-Sālimī added, he wanted to provide Faysal with an opportunity and an excuse to face 'them', those "who had tricked Omanis as they tricked and stole other nations."[75] More interestingly, al-Sālimī considered 'their' presence in Oman and in the region an act of revenge for long-ago battles, in which 'they' were defeated, "their skulls burnt,

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[73] Ibid., 129. 'Īsā was among those who tried to prevent this visit. His response to Cox's demand to meet with him was: "I will not see him and he will not see me." Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfat al-a'yān*, vol.2, 327 and Landen, *Oman since 1856*, 386.
[74] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 129.
[75] Ibid., 130.

kings enslaved and provisions looted."[76] Al-Sālimī expressed his surprise that despite all this, his opponents would befriend and trust 'them'. Addressing Fayṣal, al-Sālimī advised him to be aware of his advisors and assured him that the *nahḍa* advocates would not prefer any other ruler over him if he had to rule in a just fashion and look after his subjects.[77] He ended his poem praying for the victory of Islam over Christians and reminding his opponents that it was the ulama's duty to offer advice to rulers.

This poem revealed interesting insights on how al-Sālimī regarded Europeans, in this case the British, and their role in the region and how he associated their supremacy to the weakness of local rulers. The fact that al-Sālimī did not mention the British by name but rather used 'they' to refer to them indicates that for al-Sālimī and others the British did not feature much as the 'British' per se but rather as the European *naṣārā*, the 'Christian' Europeans.[78] Seeing the British as 'Christian' also explains why Fayṣal's reliance on the French to counterbalance British influence did not appease the Imamites. For them, both were 'Christians' who came to pillage and ruin Muslim societies and destroy Islam.

Yet that incident did not deter al-Sālimī from approaching Fayṣal again in a bid to convince him to change his policies, hence al-Sālimī's visit to Fayṣal in 1905/06 on his way to Mecca. During that visit, he provided the Sultan with both criticism of his policies and advice on ways to improve them if he wanted to regain the support of the Imamites -- advice he repeated on his return trip as well. It was a futile visit and al-Salimī's advice fell on deaf ears. The increasingly tense situation between Fayṣal and the Imamites almost exploded in 1912 when Fayṣal bowed to British demands to

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[76] Ibid., 131.
[77] Ibid., 134.
[78] In *Tuḥfat al-a'yān*, al-Sālimī used the same term 'Christians' in reference to the British.

control the arms trade in Muscat by building a warehouse where all exports and imports would be supervised. Although most of the imported arms were illegally re-exported to South Asia,[79] some must have found their way into the hands of the Imamites. Perhaps some of them were also involved in that trade. Putting that trade under British supervision would cut their arms supplies and any ensuing income. Moreover, it was another reminder that it was the British, and not Omani rulers, who were making decisions related to major internal policies.

'Isā bin Ṣāliḥ (1874-1946), who took the leadership of al-Ḥirth after his father Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī's death, protested against this concession, just as he had protested Fayṣal's earlier agreement to abolish the slave trade. Ibadi ulama toured Oman inciting people against the building of this warehouse which they characterized as a "British device to deprive the people of Oman of modern weapons."[80] By then the *nahḍa* movement had regained momentum – to which this issue of the arms concession contributed substantially -- and re-organized its ranks; it was to prove much stronger than its predecessor and even more determined to 'liberate' Oman from the rule of *jabābira*.

At this point, al-Sālimī tried to convince his pupil 'Īsā bin Ṣāliḥ to revolt against Fayṣal in order to restore the Imamate. Al-Sālimī wished that 'Īsā would carry the legacy of his father and that he would assume, like his father, a leading role in the Imamate movement. 'Īsā refused to comply claiming he could not count on the allegiance of the tribes, whom he did not trust enough.[81] When 'Īsā refused to answer the demands of al-Sālimī the latter decided to seek assistance elsewhere. He planned

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[79] Landen, *Oman since 1856*,152.
[80] Ibid., 392.
[81] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 115.

another trip to Mecca, where he would meet Maghribi scholars who would then accompany him to Algeria to meet the famous and prestigious Aṭfiyyash, with whom al-Sālimī seemed to have previously corresponded.[82] It is not clear what type of assistance Aṭfiyyash was supposed to provide for the Omani scholar; it could have been a financial one or was simply a moral support and a stamp of approval. In any case, the spiritual bond between the Ibadi communities in Oman and the Maghrib was very strong and Maghribi Ibadis had always been enthusiastic about the revival of the Imamate in Oman.[83]

On February 21, 1913 'Īsā went to meet al-Sālimī and pleaded with him not to go on that trip. 'Īsa's argument was that Oman needed al-Sālimī as a scholar and a leader and his absence for a long time would not be of any benefit for the *nahḍa*.[84] 'Īsā was able to convince al-Sālimī to cancel his trip but not his plan to rebel against Fayṣal and restore an Imamate rule. Instead of seeking help from outside, al-Sālimī was set to gather Omani support. He went on a tour in the interior of Oman and was able to receive the pledge of key leaders to support him in his mission. Prominent among them was Shaykh Ḥimyar bin Nāṣir al-Nabhānī from the Banū Riyām tribe and from a family that had provided Oman with a line of rulers –the Nabāhina- from the 12th until the 17th century. Winning Ḥimyar al-Nabhānī to the cause of the Imamate was very significant. Not only was he a chief of a very powerful and prestigious tribe and in control of the large area *al-jabal al-akhdar* (the Green Mountain), but he was also a chief Ghāfirī leader. The Ghāfiris and Ḥināwis are the two major tribe confederations in Oman and they have always been foes more than friends. The first

[82] Ibid., 115. For more details on Aṭfiyyash, see chapter 3.
[83] This historic relation between Oman and the Maghrib will be discussed in the next chapter.
[84] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 115-6.

nahḍa of 'Azzān suffered much from the fact that it did not make alliance with the Ghāfirīs but this was a mistake the leaders of the second *nahḍa* avoided successfully. By winning the support of Ḥimyar, al-Sālimī secured the alliance of a major faction of the Ghāfirī tribes. Another Ghāfirī tribe that had made a pledge to al-Sālimī was the Banū Kharūṣ, a scholarly family that had also provided Oman with many Imams in the past. The fact that al-Sālimī succeeded in winning both parties, the Ghāfirīs and the Hināwīs, to his side points to the widespread level of dissatisfaction among many Omanis with Fayṣal's negligent policy towards the interior of Oman on the one hand and his continuous concessions to British demands on the other hand. The positive response al-Sālimī received from Omani tribal chiefs seemed to have made him more determined than ever to overthrow Fayṣal. He became convinced that militancy was the only way to do so.

'Īsā, however, remained convinced that such a step was premature. He formed a Ḥirth delegation, including ex-advisor of Sultan Ḥamad in Zanzibar (the aforementioned al-Khinjarī), appealing to al-Sālimī to delay the declaration on the basis that the coalition was not sufficiently committed. Al-Sālimī, surrounded by many enthusiasts, ignored 'Īsā's warning deciding instead to act without his knowledge. He summoned his supporters to meet secretly in Tanūf and declared the rebirth of the Imamate on June 17, 1913.

For an Imamate to function and be legitimate it needs an elected Imām: Sālim bin Rāshid al-Kharūṣī was duly chosen. Al-Kharūṣī (1883-1920) was born in Mashāqiq in al-Bāṭina region. Tutored by his father, he later joined al-Sālimī's

learning circle and stayed there until he was elected Imam.[85] Al-Kharūṣī assumed his duties by sending letters to tribal chiefs asking for their support and allegiance. He also sent a letter to Fayṣal informing him of the establishment of the Imamate. This was a warning for Fayṣal to prepare himself for a military offensive.[86]

The initial success convinced many Omanis of the drive, strength and determination of the *nahḍa* leaders. Thus, one delegation of tribal chiefs after another arrived offering allegiance. 'Īsā bin Ṣāliḥ finally came with the Ḥirth leaders and offered his support. His decision seemed to have been a turning point in favor of the *nahḍa*. According to its chronicler, 'Īsā's offer of allegiance to the *nahḍa* put an end to many plots against it and prompted other leaders in Omani society to follow his lead.[87] The initial victory of the advancing troops seemed to have caused defection among the ranks of ulama working for Fayṣal in Muscat. The chief Qādī of Muscat, 'Īsa bin 'Āmir al-Ṭīwānī, sent a letter secretly to al-Sālimī praising the *nahḍa* and its victories. It acknowledged that the mission of the *nahḍa* movement was for the sake of God and that it intended to replace corruption with justice and to protect religion. Describing the British reaction to the *nahḍa's* victory, al-Ṭīwāni said that the 'West' was taken by surprise while the 'East' was joyous. He denounced the life without dignity provided under Faysal's leadership and called upon Muslims to unite behind Imam al-Kharūṣī.[88]

The victory at the Samā'il valley connecting the interior of Oman with Muscat convinced the British to intervene on behalf of Fayṣal. In July 1913, the British consul in Muscat warned al-Kharūṣī not to attack Muscat and Matraḥ. Al-Kharūṣi replied

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[85] Al-Kharūṣī initially refused to accept that position but then succumbed as he faced a death threat on the grounds that his refusal might cause division among Omanis. Ibid.
[86] Ibid., 151.
[87] Ibid, 165
[88] Ibid., 173-74

reminding the British consul that the affairs of Oman had always been in the hands of its ulama who could depose any Sultan who did not obey them. Since Fayṣal had been warned many times but still ruled Oman by force, he was considered deposed in the eyes of the ulama. Al-Kharūṣī warned the British not to attack Muslims and not to interfere in their affairs. If they did, al-Kharūṣi continued, God would aid Muslims [against the British].[89] By then Fayṣal had died and his son Taymūr succeeded him. The consul replied to al-Kharūṣī on October 8, 1913 stating that he could not judge the deceased Fayṣal anymore and promising al-Kharūṣi to work on improving relations between Omani subjects and the new Sultan.[90]

This time, the British were serious about pacifying Oman by arbitrating between Taymūr and the *nahḍa* leaders.[91] What precipitated the arbitration was the British worries about the hostile call for *jihād* made in Oman after British troops killed many of the Imamate troops in the previous month during one of the battles against the Sultan.[92] That same attack had caused a major setback for the troops of the Imām. Pressured by this military defeat, the Imamites agreed to enter formal discussions with the Sultan. In February 1915, Lord Harding went to meet Taymūr. He warned him that the British support that his predecessors had enjoyed might not be available forever. Harding offered to act as mediator between both parties.[93] In August of the same year, and through the mediation of the British political agent in Muscat and Ḥamdān bin Zāyid from Abu Dhabi, ʻĪsa bin Ṣāliḥ met with Sultan Taymūr and initiated formal

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[89] Ibid, 177
[90] Ibid, 178
[91] The British could no longer keep their gunboats on alert at the shores of Muscat as they were needed somewhere else during World War I.
[92] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-aʻyān*, 190-191
[93] Ibid.

discussions. It was not until September 1920 that both reached an agreement, known as al-Sīb agreement. This agreement resulted in the official declaration of the Imamate in the Interior of Oman and the Sultanate on the coast. This agreement remained in place until 1955, when the two parts of Oman were reunited under the banner of the Sultanate.

But what echo did this *nahḍa* have in Zanzibar? As previously discussed, Ḥamad had made contact with the previous *nahḍa* leaders and tried to strike a deal with them to reunite both countries. His ex-advisor al-Khinjarī became one of its active supporters after his exile to Oman. In fact, a number of Omanis who returned to Oman after Khālid's insurrection filled the ranks of the *nahḍa*. Among them was Sulaymān bin Ḥumayyid al-Ḥārthī (1853/4-1927) who was exiled to Oman for his role in the insurrection.[94] Another was Sayf bin 'Ali bin 'Āmir al-Maskarī (1846-1936) who was born in Zanzibar and was one of the Zanzibari Sultans' clerics. He was exiled to Oman following Khālid's rebellion in 1896, where he died. [95] Others returned to Oman upon hearing the news of the *nahḍa*. One such returnee was Shaykh 'Abd Allah bin 'Āmir al-'Izri. He was born in Oman and was blinded at the age of four. This did not deter him from continuing his religious studies under the tutelage of al-Sālimī. He embarked on a trip to Zanzibar, where he spent seven years teaching religious sciences; another seven years were spent on Pemba before he heard about the rebirth of the Imamate movement in 1913. Duty determined his return to Oman in support of this movement.[96] He became an advisor to both Imāms, al-Kharūṣī and al-

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[94] Al-Sālimī, *Jawābāt,* 361-362.
[95] Ibid., 364.
[96] Ibid.,371-373. See also Sa'īd al-Ṣaqlāwī, *Shu'arā' 'umāniyyūn* (Omani Poets) (n. p., 1992), 209-213.

Khalīlī, and was ultimately appointed a judge in Ibra' and later in Nizwa. He died in 1939.

Those returnees had also filled the ranks of the opposition to the British in Zanzibar. The defeat of Sultan Khālid's rebellion in 1896 caused a severe blow to this opposition but al-Sālimī's rebellion in Oman provided them with a new opportunity to voice their antagonism to the British and to those who bowed to them. From that perspective, Oman and Zanzibar should be seen as complementary alternatives to them; what Omanis could not achieve on one part they aspired to achieve on the other part. Omanis' agitation in Zanzibar was not meant to declare an Imamate. Oman was the seat of the Imamate, not Zanzibar. But much of that agitation was geared toward asserting, in one way or another, Zanzibar's independence from colonial rule and its organic relationship with Oman.

In addition to those who returned from Zanzibar to assist the Imamites, there was regular communication between the *nahḍa* leaders in Oman and their supporters who remained in Zanzibar. Nothing testifies to this more than a letter sent by al-Kharūṣī and al-Sālimī and dated October 03, 1913 to Nāṣir bin Sālim, Muḥammad bin Sālim, Sayf bin Khamīs, Sālim bin Sa'īd, Sālim bin Jum'a and "to the rest of Omanis and Muslims in the surroundings of Tabora".[97] Tabora was a busy center of Omani commercial activities and it is not clear from this letter whether the group of people mentioned in the letter was established there or was in Tabora temporarily. The letter did not mention family names, making it difficult to know who those people were exactly. Nāṣir bin Sālim might well be Nāṣir bin Sālim al-Rawāḥī, the *nahḍa*'s strongest advocate in Zanzibar and whose poems chronicled its victories, described the

[97] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 197.

virtues of its leaders, and glorified the Imamate. He also took upon himself the task of raising awareness of the movement in the rest of the Arab world.[98] However, al-Rawāḥi was a resident of Zanzibar and not Tabora and it is not clear, if he was one of those to whom the letter was addressed, what he and the others were doing in Tabora at the time.

After praising God for helping them restore the Sharī'a, unite and succeed, they outlined to the Omanis in Tabora their military campaign that started from Tanūf and ended in Samā'il and how they were prepared to attack Muscat. They ended the letter by informing Nāṣir bin Sālim that his letter had reached them but not his financial aid.[99] Clearly, the letter indicates that there had been continuous communication between the two parties, with the Imamites in Oman updating their supporters in Zanzibar and East Africa about the course of the *nahḍa*. It also indicates that many Omanis in Zanzibar and East Africa assisted the *nahḍa* movement, both financially and morally.

With the death of al-Sālimī in 1914 and with the ratification of the Sīb agreement in 1920, a new era in the relationship between Oman and Zanzibar was ushered in. That era marked the end of the *nahḍa* as a political movement seeking to unite Oman under the leadership of an Imām; the Imamate was now confined to the Interior while the coast remained under the Sultanate. It marked the end of more than half a century of struggle to uphold what was considered an ideal Islamic rule. The most serious fallout of that result was the weakening of the movement's prestige as one inspiring religious renewal and revival among Ibadis. Regardless of the degree to

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[98] See chapter 4 for more details.
[99] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 197-8.

which it was (un)successful in achieving its goals, the *nahḍa* had been a source of inspiration to many Omanis in both Oman and Zanzibar. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the *nahḍa* and its leaders stimulated an ideological rhetoric about Muslims versus Christian Europeans, just rulers versus *jabābira*, separation versus unity, revival versus stagnation --a rhetoric in which Omanis in Zanzibar participated and to which they were drawn. The leader of the *nahḍa* in the twentieth century, al-Sālimī, was considered the Ibadi authority whose opinions had no rivals and his *fatwas* were sought after by Ibadis in Oman, Zanzibar and North Africa. Under his leadership and that of his predecessor al-Khalīlī, Zanzibar remained at the heart of the Omani orbit represented by the Imamate movement. The vigor of that movement faded after 1920 and its rhetoric lost power.

Al-Sālimī's *nahḍa* in a Global Context

As previously stated, the Omani *nahḍa* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was not an isolated phenomenon but rather one of many that had incessantly carried the banner of religious revival since the eighteenth century. It was not unique to Oman or to Ibadis but represented a global trend of *tajdīd* among all Muslims. Despite the relative isolation of Oman from the rest of the Muslim world, it remained connected to its web of ideas and debates. What did not reach it directly was routed through Ibadis in North Africa who remained for centuries in close contact with their fellow Ibadis in Oman,[100] and through Ibadis in Zanzibar. Al-Sālimī, the twentieth century *nahḍa* ideologue, was obviously not only aware of those ideas and debates but took part in them as well. His son in his work *Nahḍat al-a'yān* mentioned al-Sālimī's

[100] See chapter 3 for more details on the relationship between Omani and Mizabi Ibadis.

correspondence with scholars in Egypt and the Maghrib.[101] Among those he had contact with in the Maghrib was Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash. Aṭfiyyash was an enemy of the French in Algeria, a critic of colonialism and a pan-Islamist whose ideas were well known to Omanis, with whom he exchanged letters and to whom he provided *fatwas*.[102] Al-Sālimī, in particular, was exposed to Aṭfiyyash's views and *fatwas* and Aṭfiyyash's honorary title 'the Pole of Imāms' was bestowed upon him by al-Sālimī himself.

Besides, al-Sālimī's trip to Mecca must have provided him with the opportunity to meet other ulama and get a glimpse of the different issues on their minds and their perspectives. It is not a coincidence that he became more determined to establish the Imamate right after his return from pilgrimage. Moreover, the content of his publications is on common grounds with the intellectual currents in the Arab world at the time. For example, he criticized the practice of *taqlīd* (imitation) and encouraged *ijtihād* (independent reasoning). The call for the opening of the gates of *ijtihād* became louder and stronger by the end of the nineteenth century. It was considered by many reformers a legal necessity in order to allow Muslims to implement changes and adapt to a fast changing world. In addition to advocating *ijtihād*, al-Sālimī believed in *talfīq*, a legal practice also advocated by reformers, which means non-adherence to a specific *madhhab* (school of law). He regarded strict adherence to a specific *madhhab* a source of division among Muslims.[103]

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[101] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 92. Unfortunately al-Sālimī's son did not mention the names of the scholars from Egypt with whom his father had contacts.

[102] Bakīr bin Sa'īd Agwasht, *Qutb al-a'imma al-'allāma Muḥammad bin Yūsuf Aṭfiyyash: ḥayātuh, athāruh al-fikriyya, jihāduh*.((The Pole of Scholars Muḥammad bin Yūsuf Aṭfiyyash: His Life, Works and Jihad) (Muscat: Maktabat al-Ḍāmirī, 1989), 104-109.

[103] The debate over the adherence to one *madhahb* was also part of the debate over *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*. Those who advocated *ijtihād* usually called for *taflīq* or the non-adherence to one *madhhab*.

His strong opinion on the necessity to revive the practice of *ijtihād* appears everywhere in his publications,[104] and his advocacy for *taflīq* was stated strongly in his answers to questions sent to him in 1908/9 by the Libyan reformer and activist Sulaymān al-Bārūnī.[105] Al-Bārūnī was one of Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash's pupils as well and a vocal proponent of pan-Islamism. He sent al-Sālimī a copy of his article entitled *al-Jāmi'a al-islāmiyya* (Muslim Union) published in his pan-Islamic newspaper *al-Asad al-islāmī* [The Islamic Lion] and asked al-Sālimī to respond to the following questions:

- Do you agree that one of the main reasons behind the division among Muslims is the numerous *madhāhib* and their disparities?
- If you do not agree, what is the main reason behind their division?
- If you do agree, is it possible to unite [the *madhāhib*] and eliminate the differences since we are in a critical need of unity at all levels?
- If it is impossible to unite the *madhāhib*, why is it so and how can we solve the problem?
- If it is possible to unite the *madhāhib*, what is the easiest way to achieve this unity, in what country should we attempt it first, and how much money do we need approximately?
- How do we organize it? And how do you judge the person seeking to achieve this? Is he a reformer or a corrupt [Muslim]?

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[104] See for example,al-Sālimī, *Jawhar al-niẓām*, idem, *Mashāriq anwār al-'uqūl* and *al-'Iqd al-thamīn*.
[105] See a discussion of al-Barūnī's role in chapter 5.

- What is the ultimate proof that a picture painted on paper with no shade is illegal, such as pictures of kings and armies used for a good purpose?[106]

Al-Sālimī admired al-Bārūnī's article on Islamic Union because it "uncovered the truth about the present situation", meaning the division and weakness of Muslims.[107] Responding to the questions, al-Sālimī agreed that the variety of *madhāhib*, as well as the variety of opinions within Islam, was the leading cause in dividing Muslims. He added that although the unity of Muslims was possible by logic, it was impossible in practice. There was no doubt that whoever sought to unite Muslims was a reformer and that the shortest way to seek unity was to teach people to identify themselves as 'Muslims' rather than followers of *madhāhib*. Al-Sālimī added that such a task depended on rulers. If they co-operated positively on that matter it could be an easy job, if not, it would be very difficult. He suggested that unity should take place first in the "land of Revelation and the cradle of Islam, the Holy Sanctuary [Mecca and Medina]"[108]. Speaking about Ibadis, al-Sālimī maintained that they considered their *madhhab* to be 'Islam' and the label 'Ibadism' was not to designate a *madhhab* but was a reference to Ibn Ibāḍ and used in his time "in order to differentiate between them [the Ibadis] and others at a time when each group [of Muslims] had chosen a different path".[109] As to al-Bārūnī's inquiry about photography, al-Sālimī answered that it was prohibited.[110]

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[106] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 92-93. Al-Bārūnī was not alone in seeking a *fatwa* about the legality or illegality of pictures taken or drawn. This was an issue that was debated by many Muslims to a large extent and was permitted by some while prohibited by others.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., 93-94.
[110] Ibid., 94.

That letter showed one of the ways by which political and intellectual currents in the Muslim world were channeled to al-Sālimī, and through him, to Zanzibar. Zanzibaris were exposed to those currents independently from Oman and through their own direct networks to the Mashriq and the Maghrib but al-Sālimī's advocacy of some of those currents added legitimacy to them in the eyes of those in Zanzibar who sought his advice and guidance. His knowledge of the outside world and the way that knowledge was routed into Zanzibar were further revealed in his treatise entitled *Badhl al-majhūd fī mukhālafat al-naṣāra wa al-yahūd* (Making Effort to Become Different from Christians and Jews).[111] This specific treatise was written to respond to answers posed by an anonymous person from Zanzibar. The *maftiyy* (the person asking for a fatwa) from Zanzibar, whom al-Sālimī called *al-mu'tariḍ* (the one who objects [to al-Sālimī's views]) either had a previous communication with al-Sālimī or had read some of al-Sālimī's *fatwas* on Zanzibari affairs and objected to some of their content. The treatise is divided into an introduction, six chapters and a conclusion. In the introduction, al-Sālimī explained that the purpose of writing this treatise was to respond to a letter he received from Zanzibar in which the *mu'tariḍ*

> defends the brothers of infidels, the worshipers of the *dirham* and the *dinār*, at a time when God has removed the rule of Zanzibar from the hands of Muslims as a result of their wrongdoings. Christians occupied it [Zanzibar] by deception and tricks and plotted to strip Zanzibaris of their religion as they stripped them of life in order for both [Muslims and Christians] to become equal [in irreligiosity]. Only the ignorant and vicious among Muslims would follow them. They dress like them, speak their languages, mix with them in their schools and aid them in their courts that have become centers for tyranny and ruin. When I advised them to correct their mistakes and get back on the straight path, I received this kind of hallucination, which they called an objection.[112]

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[111] Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd Allah bin Muḥammad al-Sālimī, *Badhl al-majhūd fi mukhālafat al-naṣāra wa al-yahūd* (n. p., 1910). The booklet can also be found in its manuscript format in the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Department of Manuscripts, Muscat.

[112] Ibid., 6.

In the first four chapters of the treatise, the author argues against attending missionary schools, adopting Christian dress, learning foreign languages and shaving beards. His argument against missionary schools was taken, almost verbatim, from Yūsuf al-Nabhānī's treatise on the threat Christian schools posed to Muslim children and Muslim identity.[113] Al-Nabhānī was a scholar from Palestine with strong conservative views and with strong connections with the Hamidian court in Istanbul. His treatise on missionary schools was one of several publications in which he warned of Western destructive impact on Islam and Muslim identity and urged the Ottoman Sultan to take actions to protect that identity. As to foreign languages, and not unlike al-Nabhānī, al-Sālimī considered them unnecessary and a possible threat to religion and to the future of Muslims because learning foreign languages could lead Muslims to neglect the Arabic language and thus, neglect the Qur'an and the Sunna.[114] Al-Sālimī seemed to have cautioned Zanzibaris previously not to learn foreign languages unless necessary, as would be the case for a ruler's interpreter.[115] Al-Sālimī quoted two examples in this section that further demonstrated his exposure to the world outside Oman. He received copies of newspapers published in Egypt such as *Nibrās al-mashāriqa wa al-maghāriba* (A Light for Mashriqis and Maghribis)[116] and *al-Hadiyya al-islāmiyya* (the Islamic Gift), each a mouthpiece of exiled Ibadis in the

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[113] Ibid., 7-26. The conservative Sufi Yūsuf al-Nabhānī (1850-1932) published a treatise on the threats of missionary schools in 1901 and voiced, in a very strong way, his concerns about the impact of western education taught in missionary schools on the future generations of Muslims. For more details, see Amal Ghazal, "Sufism, Ijtihād and Modernity: Yūsuf al-Nabhāni in the age of 'Abd al-Hamīd II," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 19(2001): 239-272.

[114] Al-Sālimī, *Badhl al-majhūd*, 42-46.

[115] Ibid., 46.

[116] See reference in Abdelghani Ahmed-Bioud et al., eds. *3200 Revues et journaux arabes* (Paris : bibliotheque Nationale, 1969), 147.

Mashriq. He referred to one article in each on the menacing effects of learning foreign languages.[117] As to his views on Western dress, they did not differ from those expressed by many scholars of his time who went as far as accusing Muslims who wore it to be sinners, if not worse.[118]

In the fifth chapter, al-Sālimī disagreed with the *mu'tariḍ*'s argument that it was the lack of co-operation between Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar that led to the latter having control over all matters. He argued that the Qur'an and the Sunna prohibited Muslims from co-operating with Christians in their unjust rule. The real problem rather lay with those who "neglected their prayers, followed their pleasures, and exchanged their Qur'an for psalms and God's remembrance for singing."[119] It was the rulers, not those who refused to work with Christians, who were to blame. "Had they [the rulers] been righteous so would have been their subjects. They are the spirit and the subjects are the body, they are the brain and the subjects are the senses..."[120] In the sixth chapter, al-Sālimī agreed with his *mu'tariḍ* that Omanis should unite, be vigilant and be prepared to face the enemy whenever he attacked; also that they should learn modern sciences and acquire new skills. Al-Sālimī agreed on almost all of this but refused to consider Fayṣal, as the Zanzibari claimed, prepared for such an important task of defending his country. For him, Fayṣal was negligent, unjust, and unfit.[121] The conclusion contained a section taken from al-Nabhānī's same treatise, cautioning Muslims against certain classical literary books published by the Jesuits in

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[117] Ibid., 49-52.
[118] For example, his views are similar to those of Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash. See Manuscript # B391. Muḥammad bin Yūsuf Aṭfiyyash, *Kashf al-karb min ajwibat al-imām al-quṭb.*, (Clearing up Anxiety with the Imam's Answers). (Department of Manuscripts, Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Muscat, Oman).
[119] Al-Sālimī, *Badhl al-majhūd,* 59.
[120] Ibid., 60.
[121] Ibid., 67.

Beirut, whom al-Nabhānī accused of omitting from those editions everything glorifying Islam. It also contained a section on al-Sālimī's views on the best ways to raise Muslim children.[122]

The treatise reveals the tension in Zanzibari society as a result of the colonial encounter, a tension common to all Muslim societies that had fallen under one sort of colonialism or another. European political and military influence in the Muslim world was not the only problem about which Muslims had to worry. It was rather the social and cultural effects of colonialism on Muslim societies and on Muslim identity that had become more alarming and of greater concern.[123] How to protect this Muslim identity was discussed extensively by many Muslim communities including Zanzibaris whose concern about Islam and their Muslim identity increased with the increase of European influence. For them, Oman was but one source of inspiration among several. Zanzibar had found itself drawn closer to where that rhetoric of 'change' and 'resistance' had been gaining momentum: the Mashriq and the Maghrib. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were to witness an unprecedented rapprochement between Zanzibar, the Maghrib and the Mashriq.

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[122] Al-Sālimī published a book full of instructions on how Muslims should raise their children and what they should teach them. See Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī, *Talqīn al-ṣubyān*.

[123] For example, a glimpse at the collection of *fatāwa al-Manār*, the Egypt-based reform oriented journal with a universal audience, reveals the extent to which Muslims from across the globe were engaged in debates related to the aforementioned issues. Al-Sālimī's views on dress and missionary schools conformed to those of the majority of ulama, whether conservative or reform inclined. His opinion on studying foreign languages, however, a highly debatable issue among the ulama, tended to be more on the conservative side and definitely shaped by al-Nabhānī's opinion as stated in his treatise on missionary schools.

Chapter III
Zanzibar at the Crossroads: Between the Maghrib and the Mashriq

Introduction

In addition to its home country Oman, the Omani elite in Zanzibar maintained ties with the Maghrib, especially the Ibadi community in the Mizab. The Ibadi tradition to which this elite belonged had existed in North Africa since the early development of Ibadism. The Ibadi communities in North Africa, mostly of Berber origin and scattered in Southern Algeria in the Mizab valley, Jirba Island in Tunisia and Nfusa Mountains in Libya,[1] had always enjoyed special relations with Oman. With Omani expansion into East Africa that special bond was extended to Zanzibar.

By the late nineteenth century, Zanzibar, Oman and Algeria -- mainly the Mizab region -- formed an Ibadi triangle that witnessed a revival of the Ibadi tradition. The collaboration among the different Ibadi communities in the context of this revival created a pan-Ibadi movement. That collaboration consisted of financial assistance offered to Ibadi scholars and the publication and wide dissemination of their works. This chapter elaborates on the leading role of Zanzibar in shaping pan-Ibadism as it offered Ibadi scholars both financial support and publication services. Like al-Sālimī in Oman, Atfiyyash, an opponent of colonialism and a proponent of Salafism and pan-Islamism, was at the center of Ibadi revival in the Mizab. Omanis in Zanzibar published his works and as his correspondence with their Sultans indicates, he enjoyed the latter's patronage.

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[1] The present demographic distribution of the Ibadi communities in North Africa is different from earlier centuries, when North African Ibadis were grouped under the Rustumid rule. See Tadeusz Lewicki, "Les Historiens, Biographes et Traditionnistes Ibadites-Wahbites de l'Afrique du Nord du VIIIe au XVIe Siècle," *Folia Orientalia* 3(1961): 1-135.

This pan-Ibadi movement was also developing a neo-Ibadi approach that was seeking common ground with mainstream Islam, represented by Sunnism, in two ways: integrating Ibadi revival with Salafi revival and integrating pan-Ibadism with pan-Islamism. The broad setting that was stimulating this Ibadi-Sunni rapprochement was the common colonial experience. As Wilkinson has observed, "the Ibadis' experience of the imperial powers was putting them on equal footing with the rest of the Islamic world and leading to some effort to find common ground between them."[2]

As will be discussed below, the Ibadi elite in Zanzibar was not only following the neo-Ibadi approach but also playing an active role in its very development. That role was most visible in the elite's relationship to Ottoman pan-Islamism and Sunni reform movements in the Mashriq. Strong relationships with Istanbul were fostered under Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II and interest was shown in the Salafiyya movement. For Zanzibar, however, it was the birth of a cultural *nahḍa* in the Mashriq that was most engaging. That was an Arab literary renaissance which focused on the leading role of the Arab culture, language, history and people. The Omani elite in Zanzibar was exposed to that trend since its inception and the Sultans of Zanzibar financially assisted several of its avant-gardes. Thus, Zanzibar was firmly tied to religious and literate movements across the Arab world and its elite played a prominent yet unacknowledged role in fostering many of the pioneers who spearheaded them. It is within the realm of those ties that we can further discern the Arab-Muslim identity of the Omani elite.

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[2] Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, 243.

Oman and Algeria

A key element in the story of Zanzibar's relationship with Algeria is the third 'side' of the triangle, namely the Omani-Algerian relationship that goes back to the eighth century, when Ibadism became firmly established in North Africa. The two Ibadi communities have had deep historical connections that are most evident in the political and intellectual realm. An Imām for one community was considered the Imām for all; knowledge was shared and advice was sought on both sides. Those connections contributed to the development of a political pan-Ibadi movement and an Ibadi religious and literary renaissance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Each community provided spiritual and moral support to the other and their internal affairs were of a mutual concern. Thus, Omanis were quick to inform Mizabis about the restoration of the Imamate in 1868 and Aṭfiyyash sought to assist al-Sālimī in his *nahḍa*. Below is an outline of that relationship as it developed between the eighth and the twentieth centuries.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Imamate is the Ibadi representation of an ideal Muslim community that is supposed to function according to Sharī'a rules. That theory of governance, based on the selection of an Imām who should be just, pious and capable of establishing God's laws on earth, regardless of his lineage, was what originally distinguished Ibadis from other Muslims.[3] Ibadi communities had striven to establish that system and while Oman had usually been governed by an

[3] Ibadis and Sunnis share similar views on the necessary qualifications of the ruler, whether he was a Sunni Caliph or an Ibadi Imam. Those qualifications are itemized according to physical, moral and intellectual abilities. They both elaborated on the same process through which the ruler should be elected, based on consultation and consensus. The major difference between the two groups however, and what distinguished Ibadis from other Muslims in the first place, was the belief that the ruler or the Imam could be of any nationality or of any lineage and not necessarily from the Prophet's tribe

Imamate, or by an Imamate and a Sultanate as was the case in the first half of the twentieth century, Ibadis in North Africa had established their own Imamate twice. The first, the Khaṭṭābiyya, lasted for four years (757-761) and stretched over modern day Libya and Tunisia. The second and last, the Rustamid dynasty with its capital at Tahert in Algeria,[4] was founded by 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Rustam in 761. 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Rustam was a pupil of Abī 'Ubayda Muslim al-Thamīmī, an Omani and follower of Jābir bin Zayd, the founder of the Ibadi sect and of the Omani Ibadi community.

The dynasty was established at a time when Omanis had lost their Imamate government temporarily to Abbasid rule. Omanis therefore recognized Imām bin Rustam at Tahert as "the Imam of all Ibadis", who "would govern the Mashriq and rule it with justice as he was ruling the Maghrib with justice."[5] It was the duty of all Ibadis to support him and for this purpose Ibadi delegates gathered in Basra in order to recognize him formally as the Imām of all Ibadis and to collect money to aid him financially. They then sent a delegation to Tahert to offer help and assess the degree to which Imām bin Rustam was conforming to the Sharī'a and ruling in a just manner.[6] Tahert became a destination for Ibadis from various places and it enjoyed a reputation as the seat of the Imamate and a prosperous city. That Imamate however, collapsed when the Shi'i Fatimid rule in Egypt put and end to it in 909. This was followed by a

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Quraysh. See Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition,* Kaylāni, "Politics and Religion in 'Umān", and Savage, *A Gateway to Hell,* 15-17.

[4] For more information on that dynasty, see Savage, *A Gateway to Hell,* 15-66.

[5] Rajab Muḥammad 'Abd al-Halīm, *Al-Ibāḍiyya fi miṣr wa al-Maghrib wa 'alāqatihim bi ibādiyyat 'umān wa al-baṣra* (al-Sīb: Maktabat al-Ḍāmirī), 134. The Mashriq, in an Ibadi context, is defined as Oman and the Arab East. In its classical meaning, the Mashriq usually refers to the Arab East alone, which includes Greater Syria, Iraq and Egypt.

[6] Ibid,135.

long period of *kitmān*[7] (secrecy or concealment), and by a dispersion of North African Ibadis southwards into their respective places of origin.

Algerian Ibadis moved to the Mizab region at the Northern edge of the Sahara, where they founded their own towns such as al-'Atf, Ta'if, Bani Yasjin, Ghirdaya. Instead of the Imamate, they established their unique system of rule, the *'azzāba*[8]. It is a self-governing system that is fundamentally related to the mosque, regulating all aspects of people's life according to the Sharī'a and speaking in the name of the whole Ibadi community of the Mizab.[9] It is headed by a council, known as *majlis al-'azzāba*[10], with its membership restricted to members of the community known for their piety, knowledge and devotion to social work.[11] Its members "provided an example for the rest of the community by living lives of extreme simplicity, austerity and purity."[12] This self-governing system, however, was gradually threatened by the French encroachment into Southern Algeria, which culminated in the political submission of the region through a treaty signed in 1853. The Mizabis were forced to sign the treaty under threat of blocking their commerce with the north of Algeria and

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[7] Ibadis can go in a state of concealment when ruled by non-Ibadis or by unjust rulers until circumstances change. Savage, *A Gareway to Hell*, 21. Ibadis also believe that *hijra* (migration) is not required in case they are under the rule of a tyrant as long as they can practice their religion, even if in secrecy. See Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash, *Sharḥ 'aqīdat al-tawḥīd* (Explaining The Theology of Unity) (Oman: Wizarat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa al-Thaqāfa, 1983), 218.

[8] The founder of this system was Abū 'Abd Allah Muḥammad bin Bakr al-Firisṭā'i (956-1049). Born in Nfusa mountains in Lybia, he ended up in Mizab, where he inaugurated the first circle of pupils in line with his views reflected in the 'Azzāba system. See also Muḥammad bin Mūsa Baba 'Ammī et al. *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya min al-qarn al-hijrī ila al-'asr al-ḥāḍir: qism al-maghrib al-islāmī* (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1999), vol.2, 368-371.

[9] See Thomas Bierschenk. "Religion and Political Structure: Remarks on Ibadism in Oman and the Mzab (Algeria)," *Studia Islamica* 68(1988): 107-27.

[10] 'Azzāba is the plural of 'azīb ('Azzabi in Mizabi dialect), he who abandons his family and devotes himself to his own work. The work here is in the service of God and the Ibadi community, to whom one devotes himself at the expense of all other commitments. See Muḥammad 'Al ī Dabbūz, *Nahḍat al-jazā'ir al-ḥadītha*, vol.1, 192-94, and Bakīr bin Sa'īd Aghwasht, *Qutb al-aimma al-'allāma Muḥammad bin Yūsuf* Aṭfiyyash*: hayātuh- āthāruh al-fikriyya-jihāduh* (al-Sīb: Maktabat al-Ḍāmirī, 1989), 50-52.

[11] Ibid.

cutting their grain supplies, the results of which would be devastating. Moreover, Laghouat, an oasis town north of the Mizab, had been sacked and ruthlessly attacked the year before. The Mizabis did not want to bring a similar fate onto their region and thus were forced into accepting the terms of the treaty. The treaty demanded "official recognition of French sovereignty, payment of an annual tribute of 45,000 francs, and the closing of markets to, and repelling by force of, all forces hostile to the French regime."[13] The Mizabis would still have control over their internal affairs and would be allowed access to French-controlled territory. Nevertheless, the treaty effectively shattered the region's autonomous status and "[t]he political fabric of the community, always delicate and heavily dependent on the moral authority of the '*azzaba*, had been loosened."[14]. In 1882 the Mizab was formally occupied by French troops. At this point, the pure Muslim society was sullied by its total submission to European Christian rule.

The Imamate that Ibadis venerated was re-established in Oman with the collapse of Abbasid rule in the eleventh century, and the Omani Imām functioned, as bin Rustam had before him, as the spiritual leader for all Ibadis. The spiritual and ideological connection between Ibadis in North Africa and Oman had been maintained after the downfall of Rustamid rule through the continuous correspondence between scholars, mutual visits, and meetings during the pilgrimage season. Oman's special status as the only seat of the Imamate meant that all Ibadis, inside as well as outside Oman, were interested in maintaining its existence. The restoration of the Imamate in

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[12] Donald C. Holsinger, "Migration, Commerce and Community: the Mzabis in eighteenth and nineteenth century Algeria," *Journal of African History* 21(1980): 71.
[13] Donald Holsinger, "Muslim Responses to French Imperialism: an Algerian Saharan Case Study," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 19(1986): 8.

the nineteenth century, then, was not only an internal Omani affair but a universal Ibadi concern. For example, a few months after 'Azzān's coup, the Imamites dispatched a letter to the Maghrib informing Maghribi ulama that

> Your Omani brothers have risen for the sake of Allah ... and revolted against unjust Sultans, and with Allah's help, they defeated the *jabābira* and drove them out. They chose their Imām, who is a man of trust, religion, reason, nobility and force against aggressors... He is the Imām of Muslims 'Azzān bin Qays.... Since this was the best of graces and an opportunity to restore what has disappeared from Sharī'a laws, it is our duty to let you know because you are our partners in all religious matters...[15]

The letter was written by al-Khalīlī and signed by the leaders of the movement, Imām 'Azzān, Muḥammad al-Ghāribī, Ṣāliḥ bin 'Alī al-Ḥārthī, Sālim al-Rawāḥī and Ḥamad bin Sulaymān al-Yaḥmūdī. The letter was sent to the Mizab with the assumption that the Mizabis would spread the news as required to the rest of Maghribi ulama. The reply from the Mizab came from the leading Maghribi scholar whom we have encountered previously, Muḥammad Atfiyyash.[16] In a poem dedicated to 'Azzān, Atfiyyash indicated his intent to go to Oman to assist the Imām.[17] He never made the trip but the content of this communication confirms that correspondence between them was customary, that both regions were intimately connected and that Oman's internal affairs, especially the choice of its government, mattered to other Ibadis.

Maghribi Ibadis followed the course of events in Oman and their interest in the Imamate movement was renewed with the rise of the *nahḍa* movement led by al-Sālimī at the beginning of the twentieth century. Mizabi ulama defined their relationship with Omani Sultans in light of the latter's relationship with Omani ulama.

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[14] Ibid., 12.
[15] Al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-a'yān*, vol. 2, 261-262.
[16] For more information on Aṭfiyyash, see below.

For example, Aṭfiyyash, like al-Sālimī, had retained cordial relations with Fayṣal when the Sultan was trying to win the Imamites to his side, hence Aṭfiyyash's advice to Sultan Fayṣal on 'religious and worldly affairs'.[18] But when al-Sālimī turned against Fayṣal, Aṭfiyyash followed in his footsteps and seemed to have provided al-Sālimī with his approval to overthrow the Omani Sultan.

Before al-Sālimī led the coup against Fayṣal in 1913, he had intended to go to Mecca to meet with Maghribi Ibadi scholars and then go to meet Aṭfiyyash who had previously shown his interest in holding such a meeting.[19] That meeting never occurred; it had been met with unexpectedly fierce opposition by some of his supporters inside Oman. While we cannot be sure how to interpret the significance of either al-Sālimī's desire for such a meeting or his followers' opposition to it, what can be concluded is that Ibadi scholars from outside Oman shared their Omani brothers' dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in Oman. They too believed that the re-establishment of an Imamate government was a priority.

In effect, the independent governing system that Ibadis in the Mizab had established as a replica of the Imamate was shaken to its core since the mid-nineteenth century. With the presence of a 'Christian' occupying force, no longer could the *'azzāba* truly represent Ibadi moral authority and political independence. Although the system was not destroyed and remained a fortress of Ibadi opposition to colonialism, its weakened position deprived Mizabis of their cherished political order through which Ibadi social and political ideals manifested themselves. Thus, their interest in

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[17] Al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-a'yān*, vol. 2, 263.
[18] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat a -a'yān*, 181. Interestingly, Rashīd Riḍā seemed to have paid Sultan Fayṣal a visit in 1912 for the same purpose as well. See Ali Merad, *Le réformisme musulman*, 223.
[19] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat a -a'yān*, 115.

reestablishing a similar order in Oman – in addition to their essential belief in the cause of the Imamites -- could also be due to their need to have those Ibadi ideals incarnated wherever possible at a time when they had lost theirs.

The involvement of Maghribi ulama in the affairs of the Imamate continued well after the death of al-Sālimī. For instance, Aṭfiyyash's nephew, Ibrāhīm, was to be appointed in 1952 and 1961 as Imām Ghālib's envoy to the Arab League and the United Nations respectively. His mission was to defend the cause of the Imamate and lobby for its international recognition as an independent entity. Another proof of continuing Mizabi involvement in Omani affairs was the on-going exchange of letters between Mizabi and Omani scholars such as the one signed by the most renowned Ibadi scholars of the twentieth century and dispatched to Oman in 1953, urging Omanis to reform their own internal politics and benefit from the resources of their country.[20]

Revival in the Mizab

This collaboration among Omani and Mizabi scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries corresponded with the rise of *nahḍa* movements in both Oman and the Mizab simultaneously. In fact, the two *nahḍas* were interrelated and instigated by each other. If Abū Nabhān al-Kharūṣī (1734-1822) was Abū al-nahḍa (the father of the *nahḍa)* in Oman, his contemporary in the Mizab was Abī Zakariyyā Yaḥyā bin Ṣāliḥ al-Afḍalī (d.1811), also called Abū al-nahḍa. Al-Afḍalī, known as 'Ammī Yaḥyā, is the one credited with initiating change in the Mizab region in the direction of religious.

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[20] Ibid., 408-11.

renewal and reform. Abī Zakariyyā received his education on Jirba Island in Tunisia,[21] where he stayed for twelve years before his departure to Cairo.[22] Upon his return to Bani Yasjin in the Mizab in 1744, his reputation attracted a number of students, among them 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Thamīnī (1720-1808). Having left his family business to devote his life to learning and teaching, al-Thamīnī had access to wealth which allowed him to purchase religious books from Jirba and Oman. Thus, he brought into the Mizab an intellectual heritage that not only addressed the scarcity of books available at the time,[23] but simultaneously broadened the geographical frontiers of Algerian Ibadis. After a decade of devoted learning he earned a reputation as the most renowned jurist in Mizab, and with his eloquent Arabic, he eclipsed Abī Zakariyyā in knowledge and fame. He became the head of the 'Azzāba in 1786 governing all of Mizab, and became its trusted Mufti.

Al-Thamīnī spent much of his time writing and left a number of books that are considered the building blocks of the Ibadi revival in North Africa.[24] He wrote numerous works in different fields of the religious sciences, the most famous being *Kitāb al-nīl wa shifā' al-'alīl* (The Book of the Nile and the Cure of the Sick),[25] the Ibadi jurisprudence text *par excellence* that was later interpreted and expanded by Aṭfiyyash.[26] The work is comparative in its approach to Islamic jurisprudence; al-

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[21] Jirba seemed to have been a prosperous center of Ibadi scholarship at the time, or at least a far more prosperous center than the whole Mizab region.
[22] Bābā 'Ammī, *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya*, vol. 2, 460-61.
[23] Dabbūz, *Nahḍat al-jazā'ir*, 267.
[24] Dabbūz considers the revival movement initiated by Abū Zakariyyā and al-Thamīnī the most significant Ibadi movement in the history of Ibadism in the Mizab region, if not the first of such wide impact. Ibid., 270-71.
[25] See a commentary on this book in E. Zeys, *Législation mozabite: son origine, ses sources, son present, son avenir*. (Alger: Adolphe Jourdan, 1886).
[26] The book is regarded as a standard reference for Ibaḍi jurisprudence as well as an authoritative source on comparative jurisprudence.

Thamīnī referred to Sunni schools as well as the Ibadi one. This in itself was significant in terms of al-Thamīnī's early attempt to find a place for Ibadi jurisprudence along with Sunni jurisprudence, presenting it as part of 'orthodox' Islam, though in a distinct way.[27]

Al-Thamīnī prepared a generation of Mizabis who believed in his message of renewal and revival. One of his pupils was Ibrahīm Aṭfiyyash (d. 1886), Muḥammad's older brother. Ibrahīm studied in his home town of Bani Yasjin and then left for Oman to seek further education. From there, he moved to Egypt, where he spent four years at al-Mu'ayyad Mosque, studying philosophy and chemistry. He visited the Hijaz and Tunisia before going to Morocco, where he taught for several years before returning to Mizab, carrying books from everywhere he had studied, in all fields of knowledge.[28] His collection, added to al-Thamīnī's, updated the library of the Mizabis significantly.

The one who was to benefit from Ibrāhīm's broad knowledge was his brother, the famous Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash, called by al-Sālimī the Pole of Imāms. He was born in 1820 in Bani Yasjin and moved to Ghirdaya. At the age of five, he went to a *Kuttāb* school, where he had learned the Qur'an by the age of nine. He initiated his own learning circle at fifteen and when he turned twenty, established the first Muslim academy in the region. He earned a good reputation at an early age and was appointed as the head of the *'azzāba*.[29] Muḥammad had inherited his brother's library,[30] enriched

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[27] Al-Thamīnī was perhaps the first to start a trend among modern Ibadis by which they have attempted to present themselves as not being fundamentally different from other Muslims, Sunnis in particular. See 'Alī Yiḥyā Mu'ammar, *Al-Ibāḍiyya bayna al-firaq al-islāmiyya 'inda kuttāb al-maqālāt fi al-qadīm wa al-ḥadīth* (London: Dār al-Hikma, 2001). An earlier attempt to accentuate 'orthodox' origins and development, along with those of Sunnis, took place in the twelfth century. See Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, 152.

[28] Aghwasht, *Quṭb al-a'imma*, 61.

[29] See Dabbūz, *Nahḍat al-Jazā'ir*, 289-357 and Baba 'Ammī et al. ed., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya*, Vol.2, 399-406.

by a collection of books Omanis used to copy for him upon request.[31] His devotion to his religious career, his knowledge of Islamic sciences and his conduct reflected the molding of a scholar of high caliber and of undisputed reputation. A number of his works are considered landmarks in modern Ibadi and Islamic scholarship; like many such collections, it was eclectic, dealing with, among other things, Arabic literature, the biography of Prophet Muḥammad, jurisprudence, exegesis and theology.

Aṭfiyyash's legacy was not built around his renowned scholarship and piety alone but around his strong antagonism to colonialism as well. Aṭfiyyash's hostile attitude toward the French was first displayed when he opposed the treaty signed between the French and the Mizab in 1853.[32] Although we do not know in what ways he did so, he must have been among those ulama in the Mizab who greeted the news of the treaty with "cries of indignation".[33] The treaty, in their eyes, was no more than a formal act of Muslim submission to Christians and loss of political independence. It is reported that in reaction to the news of the treaty, Aṭfiyyash declared that "attending eighty funerals a day of people from Bani Yasjin is better than hearing that France had stepped on one stone in Bani Tidfit [a place in Bani Yasjin].[34]

His well-known hostility prompted the French to put him under arrest just before they occupied his home town. In protest to occupation, he quit his job as a

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[30] It is also mentioned that he married a lady known for having a large collection of books. See Baba 'Ammī et al. ed., *Mu'jam a' lām al-ibādiyya*, 400.

[31] There is a letter from Muḥammad bin Sālim al-Ghāribī dated August 26, 1881 revealing a request from Aṭfiyyash to al-Ghāribī to copy the book *Qāmūs al-sharī'a* for him. See Agwasht, *Quṭb al-a'imma*, 74-75.

[32] Aṭfiyyash was among a number of scholars from the Mizab to oppose the treaty, which they considered a humiliating concession to 'Christians'. See Agwasht, *Quṭb al-a'imma*, 95 and Holsinger, "Muslim Responses," 8-15.

[33] Ibid., 8.

[34] Agwasht, *Quṭb al-a'imma*, 95-96.

judge and called on Muslims to boycott the colonizers.[35] His animosity to colonizers was manifest in his prohibition of Muslims from dealing with colonial powers in any form or way.[36] There are a number of revealing anecdotes portraying the extent of anti-French animosity and his lack of reticence in articulating his disrespect for their officials.[37] There is no doubt that the French in Mizab did not trust him. However, they could not ignore his influence and consequently tried to woo him. The attempts were in vain.[38] Because his movement was restricted by the French authorities who had him under constant surveillance, he did not travel much.[39]

His only trips outside the Mizab were to the Hijaz, where he performed pilgrimage twice. There is a record of the second trip, which he undertook between 1886 and 1888. On his way to Mecca, he visited Tunisia, where he was received with

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[35] Bābā 'Ammī et al. ed., *Mu'jam a' lām al-ibāḍiyya,* vol. 2, 404.

[36] Aṭfiyyash, *Kashf al-karb.*

[37] For example, it is mentioned that he used to put stamps on envelopes upside down to humiliate the French figures portrayed on them and that he instructed his students to imitate him. He was once paid a visit by a French army General who entered Aṭfiyyash's library while the latter was sitting on the ground delivering a lecture. When the General sat on a chair Atfiyyash changed his seat and sat on an elevated step and answered the General's inquiry about the reason for changing his place by saying that Islam is higher than all. This, according to the narrator, taught the General a lesson and made him change his place and ask Atfiyyash about Islamic history and Sharī'a. When he received a medal from France for his ability to solve the mystery of water, he placed it at the bottom of his robe and kept those he received from the Ottoman, Zanzibari and Omani Sultans on top of it. See Dabbūz, *Nahḍat al-jazā'ir*, 327-30.

[38] They presented him with a medal when he found the solution for an enigma known as the mystery of water. Solving this mystery seemed to have been a landmark in the life of Aṭfiyyash and earned him an even stronger world reputation. It was a description of a certain object and it required the identification of that object. It remained a mystery until scholars from the Hijaz sent the description to Aṭfiyyash and asked his assistance in identifying that object. Aṭfiyyash solved that mystery and recognized water as being the answer. For that, he received a number of praises and a couple of medals, one from France and another from Istanbul for his 'scientific contributions'. See Ibid., 319-320.

[39] The French general governor was regularly updated on the activities of Atfiyyash whose intercepted letters were translated into French and presented to the Governor. The French, for example, were very interested in knowing the content of *sharḥ al-nīl* and commissioned one of them to reveal its content. When reporting his findings, he noted the lack of cooperation on behalf of Atfiyyash who "ne se montrait neullement disposé à le communiquer, car dans le courant de 1884, des ouvertures officieuses lui ayant été faites a ce sujet, il avait répondre d'une façon peu satsifaisante." 22H14, no. 148. Aix-en-Province, Archives. (Thanks to Yacine Daddoun who provided me with a copy of the few documents in his possession). When asked for a copy of *al-nīl* Atfiyyash responded that the only copy he possessed

honor. In Mecca, he met with Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān (1817-1886), the influential Meccan jurist and Mufti who was known for his support of Islamic reform and for his anti-Wahhabi views. Aṭfiyyash's reputation preceded him and provided him with the incomparable opportunity of teaching in Mecca during the time he spent there.[40] Among the ulama he also met was Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥaqqī, a Turkish scholar from Istanbul; so strong was his admiration of Aṭfiyyash that it is said to have created jealousy among other scholars. In revenge, they labeled Aṭfiyyash a heretic and ultimately turned Ḥaqqī against him.[41]

In their exploration of the effects of pilgrimage and migration on Muslims, Eickelman and Piscatori indicated that "the encounter with the Muslim 'other' has been at least as important for self-definition as the confrontation with the European other."[42] While they use self-definition to mark differences among Muslims, I use it in this context to indicate a heightened identification with Islam and Muslims as a result of that encounter. Aṭfiyyash's trip to Mecca widened his world, previously framed by Ibadism, and introduced him to a variety of scholars who were at the center of the reform and renewal debate. Whatever information about that world he had learned from the books carried to the Mizab by his teacher and brother, the experience of being in the global city of Mecca and among such renowned scholars from all over the Muslim world must have expanded Aṭfiyyash's intellectual horizons.

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had been sent to Oman. Loysel commented the following on Aṭfiyyash's answer: "Ce prétexte déguisé un refus donc il n'y a pas lieu de s'étonner, étant donné l'esprit bien connu d'El Hadj Mahmed." Ibid.

[40] Baba 'Ammī et al. ed., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibādiyya* mentioned that a scholar in Hijaz called Aḥmad al-Rafā'ī left a note detailing how Atfiyyash was permitted to teach in Mecca. Ibid., 406.

[41] Atfiyyash, *'Aqīdat al-tawhīd*, 17.

[42] D. F. Eickelman and J. Piscatori, eds., *Muslim Travelers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), xv.

It is probably in Mecca that he was either introduced to or learnt more about Muḥammad 'Abduh and his *salafiyya* movement. *Salafiyya* is in reference to the *salaf*, the community of Muslims at the time of Prophet Muḥammad and the first four Caliphs, known as the rightly guided Caliphs or the *Rāshidūn*. The movement acquired that title because it believed that the period of the *salaf* was the best and most glorious period in Islamic history in terms of how Islam was understood and applied by its adherents. Salafis called for a return to the fundamentals of Islam as they were practiced by that early community in order to reform Islam. The *salaf*, Salafis believed, were not corrupted by 'innovations', practiced intellectual rigor through *ijtihād* (reasoning in legal matters), and upheld a just political system through *shūrā* (consultation). For Islam to be reformed, the ideals of the *salaf* had to be imported and implemented in the political and intellectual life of Muslims. More significantly for Salafis, those ideals, if implemented, would prove that Islam was compatible with modernity. The movement developed its rhetoric in response to challenges posed by the multi-faceted success of Europe in comparison with overall weakening of Muslims. 'Abduh was the scholar at the center of that movement and its most influential intellectual but Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā also played a significant role in its inception and development.[43]

Aṭfiyyash seemed to have been very impressed by 'Abduh, and according to *al-Manār* of Rashīd Ridā, he admired 'Abduh and Riḍā's commentary on the Qur'an

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[43] For more information on the movement and its leaders, see Charles Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: a study of the modern reform movement inaugurated by Muḥammad 'Abduh* (New York: Russel and Russel, 1933), Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, Malcolm H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: the Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1966), Marwan Buheiry, ed., *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939* (Beirut: American University of Beirut , 1981), David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics, and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

called *tafsīr al-Manār*.[44] In his book *In lam ta'rif al-ibāḍiyya* (If You Did Not Know Ibadism),[45] Aṭfiyyash claimed that Muḥammad 'Abduh, with whom he had been corresponding,[46] had paid a visit to Tunisia for the sake of Aṭfiyyash.[47] 'Abduh instructed the residents of the Zaytūna University to refer to Aṭfiyyash in legal matters. According to Aṭfiyyash, Muḥammad 'Abduh continued: "We ask him [Aṭfiyyash] from Egypt. You are closer to him than we are."[48] To be referred to in legal matters by someone like 'Abduh, Aṭfiyyash must have established an unchallenged reputation in the Arab world, among Ibadi as well as Sunni *'ulamā'*.[49]

Aṭfiyyash might have earned the reputation that he did particularly among Salafis due to his role in leading in the Mizab a movement similar to 'Abduh's. That movement, labeled as neo-Ibadism, promoted "a wave of puritanical reform, the eradication of heretical practices of Berber origins and a restyling of the educational system with the emphasis on classical Arabic education."[50] This neo-Ibadi movement fostered a methodology of Islamic reform and renewal similar to the one developed by the Salafiyya in the Mashriq and that basically advocated a *retour aux sources*. This meant a return to the fundamentals of Islam and the eradication of *bida'* (innovations) in order to reform the religion. A return to the fundamentals, however, implied

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[44] *Al-Manār*, 2(1899), 110.

[45] Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash, *In lam ta'rif al-ibādiyya ya 'uqba ya jazā'irī*. (n. p, n.d). The book was written in 1910, to which al-Sālimī added few commentaries. It was edited by al-Shammākhī and al-'Āmirī upon the request of Sultan Fayṣal in Oman when he was still maintaining relations with the I..amites.

[46] Dabbūz. *Nahḍat al-jazā'ir*, 353.

[47] Atfiyyash did not elaborate in what sense 'Abduh's visit to Tunisia was for his sake. See Atfiyyash, *In lam ta'rif al-ibāḍiyya*, 13. 'Abduh paid two visits to Tunisia during his lifetime. The first took place in 1887 and the second in 1903. It is not clear to which visit Atfiyyash referred.

[48] Ibid.

[49] *Al-Manār* described Atfiyyash as the "the greatest Ibadi scholar and the most renowned of the century." *Al-Manār*, vol. 8, (1905): 940.

[50] Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, 243-44.

emphasizing the orthodoxy of Ibadism, a task Aṭfiyyash undertook along with al-Sālimī in Oman.

Aṭfiyyash's *Izālat al-i'tirāḍ 'an muḥiqqī āl ibāḍ*, an exposé on Ibadi doctrine and beliefs, was written for the purpose of finding that common ground with mainstream Sunni Islam.[51] He reduced the points of contention between Ibadis and Sunnis to four points only, which he summarized in two pages out of fifty six.[52] Being the pillars of this neo-Ibadi revival movement, both Aṭfiyyash and al-Sālimī tried to make the Ibadi revival part of the general Islamic revival and both tried to give less weight to sectarian divisions.[53] Both were aware of larger intellectual currents in the Muslim world and their task was to integrate Ibadism into them. A significant subject that both Aṭfiyyash and al-Sālimī tackled was the need to practice *ijtihād* and to re-introduce it into Islamic intellectual life. Aṭfiyyash considered *ijtihād* a practice that was supposed to be present at all times and even stated that Ibadis should consider those who denied *ijtihād* to be infidels.[54] Al-Sālimī's views on *ijtihād* were as strong. He asserted in different publications that *ijtihād* was a necessity and a duty.[55] Their personal support of this point on many occasions was yet another way of tying Ibadism into Salafi movements that were calling loudly for the resurgence of *ijtihād*.

Aṭfiyyash's trip to Mecca may well have brought him closer to the Ottomans as well. We know he had contacts with Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II from whom he received a number of decorations. His interest in the Ottoman dynasty further reflected

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[51] Muḥammad Yūsuf Aṭfiyyash, *Izālat al-i'tirāḍ 'an muḥiqqī āl ibāḍ* (Oman: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa al-Thaqāfa, 1982).
[52] Ibid., 52-54.
[53] See al-Sālimī's response to Sulaymān al-Bārūnī regarding sectarian divisions in Islam, discussed in the previous chapter.
[54] Aṭfiyyash, *'Aqīdat al-tawḥīd*, 64-5.

his general concern about how Muslim dynasties were faring in the face of European threats. He followed the news of the Ottomans in their wars against separatist movements in the dynasty's European provinces and used to pray for the victory of the Ottomans. For example, during the First Balkan War (1912-1913), he was shown pictures of the Ottoman army fighting retreating Greek soldiers. His immediate reaction was to ask his students to pray for the glory and victory of the Ottomans.[56]

His students outside the Mizab used to send him newspapers to keep him updated about the current affairs of the Muslim world. When Italy invaded Tripoli in 1911, he led a campaign of support and collected money and arms for local fighters. He used to interrupt his classes in order to pray for the victory of Tripolitanians and all Muslims.[57] This concern about the Ottoman dynasty and its Muslim subjects reflected the other side of neo-Ibadism, the one that incorporated Ibadis into pan-Islamism.

Disciples from across the Maghrib came to study under Aṭfiyyash; they too became influenced by his calls to revive religion and promote the unity of Muslims. He prepared a generation of Ibadi scholars and activists who were to play a major role in the political and intellectual history not only of the Maghrib and Ibadism but also of the Mashriq. Prominent in this group was the activist Sulaymān al-Bārūnī from Jabal Nfūsa in modern day Libya, a member of the Council of Deputies in Istanbul (1908-1911) and of the Ottoman Parliament (1913-1916). He played a leading role in the Tripolitanian resistance against the Italians in the early 1910s. He endured exile until he was allowed to reside in Oman where he worked as an official advisor for Imām al-

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[55] Discussions around that topic are also found in *Qāmūs al-Sharī'a*, published in the late nineteenth century in Zanzibar.

[56] Abī al-Yaqẓān al-Ḥāj Ibrahīm, *Sulaymān al-Bārūnī bāsha fī aṭwār ḥayātih* (Sulayman Al-Baruni Pasha: the Stages of His Life) (n.p, 1956), 74.

Khalīlī between 1924 and 1926, and remained a consultant for the Imām as well as the Sultan until his death in 1940.[58] Another was Aṭfiyyash's nephew Ibrahīm, who, like al-Bārūnī, was exiled from his country Algeria and later from Tunisia for his anti-colonial activities. He resided in Egypt in 1923, where he came under the influence of Muḥammad Rashīd Ridā.[59] Another student of Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash was Ṣāliḥ bin Yahyā bin al-Hāj Sulaymān from the Mizab, who left Aṭfiyyash for Tunis in 1917, where he studied at the Zaytūna University. There, he participated in the active political and intellectual life and aided the prominent Tunisian politician of Algerian origin 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Tha'ālibī (1874-1944) in his struggle against the French; in the process, he helped him establish the important anti-colonial Constitution Party in Tunisia.[60] Still another well-known student of Aṭfiyyash was Ibrāhīm Abī al-Yaqẓān (1888-1973). He joined Aṭfiyyash in 1907 and then left for al-Zaytūna University in 1912. He used the eight journals he established as a platform to defend Ibadism and Islamic renewal and to criticize colonialism and colonial policies in Algeria and the Arab world in general.[61] He became known as the 'Pioneer of the Arab Press' in Algeria.

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[57] Dabbūz. *Nahḍat al-Jazā'ir,* 332-33

[58] See Abī al-Yaqzān, *„Sulaymān al-Bārūnī bāsha,,* and *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibādiyya*, vol.2, 206-09. Al-Bārūnī, contrary to what Pouwels claimed, was not at the court of al-Khalīlī in the late 1860's but rather in the court of the second Imām al-Khalīlī in the 1920s. For more information on al-Barūnī, see chapter 5.

[59] See Baba 'Ammī et al. eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibādiyya*, vol. 2, 24-6 and see Muḥammad Nāṣir, *Al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Aṭfiyyash fī jihādih al-islāmī* (Shaykh Ibrahīm Aṭfiyyash in his Islamic Jihad) (al-Sīb: Maktabat al-Dāmiri, 1992). See chapter 5 for more details on Ibrāhīm Aṭfiyyash.

[60] Baba 'Ammī et al. eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya,* 235.

Zanzibar, pan-Ibadism and neo-Ibadism

As shown in the previous chapter, Zanzibar was itself at the center of the *nahḍa* movement in Oman. Naturally, the Omani elite in Zanzibar retained its ties with other Ibadis, including those in the Mizab with whom they had been historically and spiritually connected. In Zanzibar, several Sultans took a leading role in honoring those historical and spiritual connections with the Mizab by supporting efforts to sustain and develop its religious revival movement and by financially sponsoring Aṭfiyyash, the scholar at the center of that movement. The role of the Omani elite, however, was not confined to one fostering pan-Ibadism only but extended to one that contributed to a neo-Ibadi movement seeking political and intellectual rapprochement with pan-Islamism and Sunni reformism.

Aṭfiyyash had long been known among Omanis in Zanzibar. It was Barghash who sponsored the publication of his *Himyān al-zād ilā dār al-ma'ād* (Passionate Provisions for the Afterlife) in fourteen volumes, a comprehensive *tafsīr* (interpretation of the Qur'an) that touches on grammatical and linguistic aspects of the Qur'an and offers a sketch of Ibadi beliefs.[62] Moreover, in recognition of his scholarly contributions, Sultan Barghash honored Aṭfiyyash with a high ranking medal. In his *In lam ta'rif al-ibāḍiyya*, Aṭfiyyash mentioned Sultan Barghash as being a prominent figure in the world of Ibadis. He listed his virtues and specifically mentioned his trip to Mecca, during which he had been accompanied by the Sheriff of Mecca. Aṭfiyyash approved of Barghash's decisions with respect to religious fidelity. He recounted, for

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[61] Ibid., 27-30. See also Muḥammad Nāṣir, *Diwān Abi al-Yaqẓān*. (Abī al-Yaqẓān's Collection). 3rd. ed. (al-Sīb: Maktabat al-Ḍāmiri, 1991), and Aḥmad Muḥammad Farṣūṣ, *Al-Shaykh Abu al-Yaqẓān Ibrāhīm kama 'araftuh* (Shaykh Abu al-Yaqẓān Ibrahīm as I knew Him) (Oman: Maktabat al-Ḍāmirī, 1992).

[62] Dabbūz, *Nahḍat al-jazā'ir*, 158-160. The *Himyān* was published between 1887 and 1897.

example, the story of Barghash's reply to the Sheriff when the latter asked the Sultan to designate a special hut for Ibadis in the Holy Mosque. According to Aṭfiyyash, Barghash refused on the grounds that only Prophet Ibrahīm had a sanctuary in the Holy Mosque and that even if he were to agree and build one, Ibadis would denounce such an act and would not approach the hut.[63]

Atfiyyash continued to enjoy a special status granted by the Zanzibari elite well after the death of Barghash. He remained under the financial sponsorship of succeeding Sultans who also continued to arrange for the publication of his books. His proximity to the court and the courtesy offered by the Sultans is revealed in the following correspondence with Sultan Ḥmūd, from whom he had received a high ranking medal, the Order of the Brilliant Star of Zanzibar[64]:

> Please know, may Allah have mercy on you, that I had cashed the money in Algeria for the value of ninety nine riyals. And please let me know, may Allah render you victorious -and I remind you to fear Allah-, if you had received two volumes of *Ḥāshiyat Abī Mas'ala*[65] and a poem I composed for you and repeated twice. If God wills, send me –Sultan Hmūd- a party (*shī'a*) from you or from among those you like and hold in esteem, in which I pride myself against polytheists... You either send it [sic] to me,[66] and we both benefit from it or you turn it down. If you do [turn it down] I would still grateful you for your previous benevolence, of which I only ask you and Allah. In any case, please do not mention my request to anyone, delete the number and convey to me in writing what your opinion is as you see it and not as you hear.[67]

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[63] Aṭfiyyash, *In lam ta'rif al-ibāḍiyya*, 77. Philip Ṣadgrove recounts a similar episode attributed to Ḥmūd. Sadgrove, "From Wādī Mīzāb to Unguja," Scott S. Reese, ed. *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 200.

[64] Aṭfiyyash, *In lam ta'rif al-ibāḍiyya*, 31.

[65] That was another book that Atfiyyash edited.

[66] This most probably refers to some sort of financial assistantship that Aṭfiyyash had requested.

[67] An unnumbered document found in the Department of Archives and Documents, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Muscat, Oman.

This letter suggests that Aṭfiyyash was receiving and accepting financial assistance from the Zanzibari Sultan[68]-- an assistance, he hoped, would remain confidential as the last part of the letter indicates. Aṭfiyyash's spiritual and moral authority over the Sultan is also obvious in his reminder to the Sultan to fear Allah.

That patronage continued in some form under Ḥmūd's successor 'Alī but seems to have ended or been suspended at some point. We have a letter that was sent by an anonymous writer to the Sultan reminding him of the value of [Islamic] knowledge and how much time acquiring that knowledge demanded; it was therefore impossible for scholars to undertake additional work for financial support. It is possible that the letter was sent by Sulaymān al-Lamkī, the wealthy landlord and governor of Dar es Salaam, who met Aṭfiyyash while traveling in Algeria in 1900.[69] The letter drew Sultan 'Alī's attention to the two Ibadi scholars, Aṭfiyyash and al-Sālimī, and to their devotion to learning and teaching of Islamic studies. It was 'Alī's duty, the letter instructed, to offer them help.[70] It is not clear whether this was a mere reminder to 'Alī to continue his support for them or a response to a suspension of that support. It is obvious from another letter sent by Aṭfiyyash himself to Sultan 'Alī that he had been receiving financial aid previously from 'Alī but that aid had been

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[68] Sadgrove has recently documented continuous correspondence between the Algerian scholar and Sultans Ḥmūd and 'Alī. Idem, "From Wādī Mīzāb to Unguja," *The Transmission of Learning*, 185-211.

[69] His reputation brought him to Germany to meet the German Kaiser, to Istanbul where he was received by Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II, and to London where he met King Georges V. He had a German passport, as did his son Nāṣir, who was exiled to India by the British during WWI because he was a holder of the German citizenship. Interview, Sa'īd al-Riyāmī, Muscat, March 19, 2002. According to Mr. Sa'īd, Nāṣir's exile was caused by his possession of the German nationality and not by anti-British activities. However, given Nāṣir's activities within the Arab community of Zanzibar, especially his role in editing *al-Najāḥ*, a newspaper that seemed to have been pro-Ottoman during the War, the British decision might have been prompted by more than Nāṣir's German citizenship. Dr. Ibrahim Soghayrun, professor of History at the University of Sultan Qabūs, Muscat, mentioned to me that it was Sulaymān al-Lamki who introduced Atfiyyash after he undertook a trip to North Africa. Interview, Dr. Ibrahim Soghayrun, Muscat, April, 2002

[70] AL3/1C. Department of Archives and Documents, Ministry of Heritage and Culture. Muscat, Oman.

suspended by the Sultan for unknown reasons. Aṭfiyyash complained to 'Alī about this neglect and indicated that he did not know the reason for this 'change of heart'. Moreover, Aṭfiyyash went on to ask for an update on a book that seems to have been in press and showed his willingness to abandon anything that might have upset the Sultan.[71] Whether 'Alī was pressured to suspend his relations with scholars like Aṭfiyyash and al-Sālimī for political reasons that had nothing to do with their actual actions is not clear.

Whatever the reason was behind this strained relationship between 'Alī and Aṭfiyyash, the latter benefited from Zanzibari patronage that sustained him by providing him with financial assistance for years and more important with the means for his works to be published and disseminated. This patronage, in return, helped revive Ibadi heritage, and as a result, contributed immensely to the Ibadi renewal and revival movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hence, we can accord Zanzibar a central role in the development of modern Ibadi renewal and in shaping pan-Ibadism.

The Omani elite's interest in pan-Ibadism was a natural outcome of its sectarian affiliation but its role should be understood in terms of using pan-Ibadism, like the Ottomans did with pan-Islamism, as an anti-colonial ideology. As we have seen in the case of the *nahḍa* in Algeria and Oman, the colonial factor in both countries spurred religious renewal and reform and shaped both its intellectual discourse and political course. Zanzibar was no exception. The discussion outlined in the previous chapter between al-Sālimī and the anonymous correspondent from

[71] Unnumbered file in AA 5/21. Department of Archives and Documents, Ministry of Heritage and Culture, Muscat, Oman.

Zanzibar shows in what ways colonialism threatened traditional Islamic values in Zanzibari society. The Omani elite, in charge of defending those values, found its control over internal matters increasingly curbed by the British. That control had been undermined since 1861 and seriously challenged with the abolition of the slave trade in 1876. With the declaration of Zanzibar a British Protectorate in 1890, all details of internal affairs were gradually transferred to the British. The harsh reality of colonialism had manifested itself since then in different forms such as the military assault on Sultan Khālid and the defeat of his rebellion, and the British decision in 1897 to abolish domestic slavery,[72] antagonizing the large number of slave owners in Zanzibar. Yet more concrete steps were taken through the process of establishing what the British called an 'effective' system of government during the first decade of the twentieth century. With the erection of a Ministry of Agriculture in 1901, the clove industry -- vital to the economic interests of the Omani elite -- came under British control. As part of British attempts to exercise firmer control over the island, its revenues, and institutions, they decided to extend their control over the Sultan's personal expenditures, otherwise known as the Civil List. They also undertook rigorous legal changes, the most significant being to make the ulama into government-paid civil servants and terminate the Sultans' right as the last appellate institution, thus ending, in a practical as well as a symbolic way, the Sultan's ultimate authority and giving a blow to one aspect of the his traditional prestige and honorary power.

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[72] This is the date when the legal status of slavery in Zanzibar Protectorate was abolished but this was not, by any means, the first measure taken by the British to crack down on the slave trade and slavery. The slave trade itself had been restricted progressively since 1845 until Sultan Barghash was coerced to forbid the sale of slaves in his dominions in 1873. See Miers, *Britain and the Ending of the Slave Trade*, and Bennett, *A History of the Arab State*.

There was no doubt in the mind of the Sultans that their credibility was at stake and that they had to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of their Muslim subjects. Sultan Khālid's ultimate defeat and humiliation notwithstanding, his act of defiance made him a hero in the eyes of his subjects, as shown in the previous chapter. Succeeding Sultans had to seek legitimacy without jeopardizing their seat. They found it in an ideological resistance to colonialism. Supporting pan-Ibadism was one of its aspects but that support had far reaching implications. By supporting pan-Ibadism, Ibadis in Zanzibar promoted neo-Ibadism.

Neo-Ibadism is a term coined by Wilkinson in his observation of Ibadi emphasis since the late nineteenth century on the features common with mainstream Islam, represented by Sunnism.[73] This rapprochement between Ibadis and Sunnis manifested itself at two levels: merging pan-Ibadism with pan-Islamism and fusing Ibadi renewal and reform with Salafism as it developed in the Mashriq. Wilkinson saw the emergence of neo-Ibadism to have particularly taken place in the Mizab and to have developed under Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash. Aṭfiyyash might have developed neo-Ibadism by building intellectual bridges with Salafi reformers but the Omani elite in Zanzibar cultivated neo-Ibadism at a more concrete level. It forged political and diplomatic relationships with Ottoman pan-Islamism and financially supported both the religious and the literary *nahḍas* in the Mashriq. The Mashriq, consisting of Egypt, Iraq and Greater Syria did not share with that elite the same sectarian affiliation, i.e., Ibadism, but it did share adherence to Islam and a cultural stake in its lingua franca, Arabic.

Zanzibar and Ottoman pan-Islamism

Al-Busa'īdīs' cordial relationship with the Ottomans goes back to the eighteenth century when Imām Aḥmad, the founder of the dynasty, defeated the Persians and forced them out of Oman. The Persians had been a threat to the Ottomans in Arabia, and as a reward for keeping the Arabian Peninsula secured against the Persian threat, the Ottomans provided Oman with an annual subsidy until the early nineteenth century. Although neither Oman nor Zanzibar was part of the Ottoman dynasty, they nevertheless recognized the legitimacy of the Ottoman rule. That rule became more venerated in the late nineteenth century when the Omani Sultans, as the following illustrates, established stronger links with the Ottoman court and when the Ottoman Sultan sought to integrate Zanzibar into the realm of Ottoman pan-Islamism. Omanis and Zanzibaris in general responded positively to the Ottoman initiatives in defiance of the British.

In terms of the Zanzibari-Ottoman relationship, available details show that a significant number of Ottoman merchants resided in Zanzibar and were involved in trade and community work,[74] and that that relationship seemed to have gained an unprecedented significance during the Hamidian period (1876-1909) and as a result of the Ottoman Sultan's pan-Islamic policy. The ultimate goal of that policy was to face the menace of nationalist movements threatening the unity of the dynasty on one hand and to intimidate European colonial powers ruling over Muslim communities on the other hand. While the success of that pan-Islamism with respect to curbing nationalist

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[73] See Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman*, 243.

[74] Ḥikmat Sharīf, *Tārīkh Zanjubār* (n.p. n.d). According to the author, there were about one hundred wealthy Ottoman merchants in Zanzibar, some of whom owned two ships operating between Zanzibar

influences was limited, the second goal was largely achieved. Pan-Islamic policy resonated in many parts of the Muslim world, including Zanzibar,[75] where Sultans cultivated strong and significant relationships with the Ottoman court. The long rule of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II coincided with that of five Zanzibari Sultans, from Barghash to 'Alī and with the firm establishment of British control over Zanzibar. It is not surprising that during that period, ties between Zanzibar and the Ottomans were strengthened and visits were exchanged between members of the Zanzibari elite and Ottoman officials.[76]

Sultan Barghash was first contacted by the Ottoman court in 1877 upon receiving the news of his intention to go to Mecca to perform pilgrimage. When he failed to go, the Ottoman Porte ordered his deputy in Hijaz to send Barghash the

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and Bombay, India. They built a mosque, an office and a public library and established a monthly newspaper entitled *'Irāq*. See Ibid., 15.

[75] This most probably led the Zanzibari scholar of 'Alawi affiliation Ahmad Ibn Sumayṭ to embark on a journey to Istanbul, where he was introduced to Sultan 'Abd al-Hamīd II, awarded the Majidi Order of the Fourth Class in addition to a pension, and where he stayed for some time working with one of 'Abd al-Hamīd's closest advisors Faḍl Pasha compiling a biography on Faḍl's father. The project was funded by the Ottoman court as was the case with many other works of a Sufi character that were published abundantly under the Hamidien rule. For information on Faḍl Pasha, see T. Buzpinar, "Abdulhamid II and Sayyid Fadl Pasha of Hadramawt: An Arab dignitary' ambitions. 1876-1900," *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 13 (1993): 227-39. For more information on Ibn Sumayt and the 'Alawiyya Order to which he belonged see Anne Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea.* For the information on Ibn Sumayṭ's visit to Istanbul see Ibid, 132-33. Ibn Sumayṭ's journey to Istanbul, his reception by the Ottoman Sultan and his sponsorship through the guarantee of a pension was not a privilege restricted to him alone. Istanbul became a destination for many Arab scholars who were, in one way or another, recruited to the Ottoman capital, and who, like Ibn Sumayṭ, were introduced to the Sultan and offered a pension and sometimes a job in the city. That was all part of the pan-Islamic policy of 'Abd al-Hamīd II. The Ibadi diaspora in Egypt, with links to both Oman and Zanzibar, must have played a role in disseminating pan-Islamic ideas and recruiting support for the Ottoman Sultan. This was clearly revealed in a letter published in *nibras al-mashāriqa was al-maghāriba* in Cairo and addressed to Sultan Fayṣal of Oman. In that letter, Faysal was asked to study the content of *al-nibras* carefully [content pertaining to pan-Islamism] and was told that he was considered by Sultan Abd al-Ḥamīd "as the most eminent Chief among those of the Peninsula". He warned him that the independence of the chiefs in the Peninsula could only be retained by a joint effort to band together. See Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam*, 62, and Appendix G for the full text of the article.

[76] It is worth mentioning here that Sultan Ḥmūd seemed to have received the Majīdī Order from Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II. See Document from file AA5/3, dated 1895. The name of the correspondent is not clear at the bottom of the document. He also informed Sultan Ḥmūd that a certain Amīn bek had been

Majidiyya Order with a letter from Sultan 'Abd al-Hamīd addressed to Barghash. The gesture was to assure that "the spiritual ties bounding together the Muslim community would be strengthened."[77]

When Sultan Khalīfa (r. 1888-90) succeeded his brother Barghash to the throne, he was immediately sent a congratulatory letter from Istanbul. Khalīfa's subsequent reception of the Ottoman ambassador and his approval of an Ottoman legation in Zanzibar prompted the Ottoman Sultan to send an emissary of a higher profile called 'Abd al-Qādir al-Danā, a judge from Beirut, accompanied by a military attaché, Sāmī Bey, who was to offer military advice to Zanzibar.[78] In the letter dispatched with al-Danā, the Sultan condemned the interference of European powers into Zanzibari affairs and their blockade of the East African coast. The Ottoman Sultan assured Khalīfa that, as the holder of the "glorious caliphate… and in view of the well being of the faith and the ultimate goal of achieving the happiness and progress of the Muslims," he could not remain indifferent to the events in that part of the world.[79] It is not clear what measures the Sultan was to take in order to show his indifference, but the letter pointed that al-Danā's role was to closely assess the situation in Zanzibar and to report to the Sultan directly.

At the time, the Germans, who entered the East African scene in 1884, had claimed possession over large parts of the East African coast – parts belonging to al-Busa'īdī Sultanate in Zanzibar -- a claim approved by the British on the condition that

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dispatched to Zanzibar for the purpose of providing the special dress on which the Majīdī Order should be placed.

[77] Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 272.

[78] Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islamism,* 68, and Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* 273.

[79] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* 273.

there would be no German interference in Zanzibar itself. The blockade on the coast, enforced by the Germans in December 1888 and supported by the British, aimed at controlling the slave trade but also at weakening resistance to the Germans on the coast. Khalīfa had tried to defy the Germans and British policies on several occasions and was known to have entertained the idea of taking an independent political course. Perhaps this rapprochement with the Ottomans was one of his tactics to ease the pressure or seek outside allies who were as antagonistic to European colonial policies in East Africa as he was. It is doubtful that in the end the Ottomans were able to offer any concrete assistance to the Zanzibari Sultan against either the Germans or the British. Pan-Islamism was a sincere policy to highlight and strengthen bonds among the Ottoman court and other Muslims but rarely did it translate into more than rhetoric. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd might have shown interest in every corner of the world where Muslims were trying to resist European colonialism but as Azmi Özcan observed in his study on pan-Islamism and Muslim Indians, "[t]here is no evidence to suggest that he ever seriously and realistically contemplated the formation of a global Muslim united front for military purposes against Christian dominion..."[80]

Cordial ties with Istanbul culminated eventually in the official visit of Sultan 'Alī (r. 1902-1911) to Istanbul in November 1907 and where he was received by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd himself.[81] 'Alī had officially acknowledged 'Abd al-Hamīd as the Caliph of

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[80] Özcan, *Pan-Islamism,* 51.

[81] The impact of that visit on 'Alī in terms of redefining his relationship with the British was noted by Hollingworth who reported that, upon his return, the Sultan "began to chafe at the restrictions imposed upon him by the Regency and to show resentment at his treatment by Mr. Rogers." Hollingworth, *Zanzibar under the Foreign Office,* 179. He also provided some details on the royal treatment 'Alī received during his stay in Istanbul, "where he was treated with considerable deference. Court carriages were placed at his disposal, a military review was held in his honor, and on the evening of his arrival he was received by the Sultan of Turkey. The following night he dined at the Palace, and afterwards had a

Muslims, as had the many Muslims in Zanzibar and the East African coast who used to praise his name during Friday prayer.[82] In that same year, 'Alī offered to act as a mediator between the Ottoman Sultan and some Yemeni rebels. His aim was "to pull together the parts of a warring Islamic commonwealth and halt a conflict between Muslims."[83] The following year, 'Ali received in Zanzibar the Ottoman Grand Vizier and other dignitaries sent on behalf of 'Abd al-Hamīd.[84]

In what seems to be an attempt to give the Zanzibari-Ottoman relations a more official meaning, 'Alī ordered a change of the dress code among members of Zanzibar's 'notables' when attending official events. The traditional Omani dress was to be replaced by one that resembled more the Ottoman dress, which was represented by the fez, the coat and the traditional baggy pants (*shirwāl*).[85] It is doubtful that the change of dress was ultimately adopted by many or by any but the significance of such a decision lies in its symbolic meaning. Sultan 'Alī was projecting an image of his officials as being part of those of the Ottoman court.

'Alī's exceptional interest in the Ottomans and in pan-Islamism can be attributed to the fact that his decade of rule witnessed increasing British control over Zanzibari affairs, as previously stated. He felt increasingly pressured by the British to offer more concessions, a pressure he constantly tried to resist. In 1911, 'Alī finally decided to abdicate as a sign of his unwillingness to remain under British control. His

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long conversation with the Sultan, who conferred on him the Grand Gordon of the Osmanieh." Ibid., 189.

[82] The name of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamīd II, under whose rule pan-Islamism reached its apex, was mentioned during the Friday prayers in Zanzibar one year after his deposition. See Jacob Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization*, 2sd. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 68.

[83] Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods*, 175.

[84] Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 207. 'Alī's insistence on granting each of them a medal of "Order of the Brilliant Star" caused a quarrel between him and the British over the cost of the medals (total of 315). See Ibid.

decision came right after he was invited by the British government to witness the coronation of George V. When he reached Paris, he changed his mind and decided not to go himself to Britain but to send Khalīfa on his behalf. When the event was over, 'Alī sent a letter from Paris informing British officials about his decision to abdicate.[86] He remained in Paris until his death on December 19, 1918 when he died.

Sultans in Zanzibar were not alone in harboring sympathetic feelings toward the Ottomans. The general public shared those feelings as well, which manifested themselves in a public manner at times when the Ottoman dynasty was challenged or threatened. For example, Zanzibaris held public demonstrations and boycotted Italian goods after the Italian invasion of Tripoli, then under Ottoman rule.[87] This sympathy made it difficult for the British to win public support of Muslims in Zanzibar and East Africa during World War I.[88] It also prompted Sultan Khalīfa bin Ḥārib, in order to counter the Ottoman Sultan's call for *jihād* against the British, to issue a statement on November 6, 1914 urging Zanzibaris and Muslims on the East African coast to cease their support for the 'Turks' and show loyalty to the British instead.[89] Khalīfa declared that

> although the Turkish State is considered a pillar of the Muslim world it diverted its policy and lost its suzerainty by interfering in the European war... Antagonizing the British is harmful for the State of the Turks and for Muslims as well...: They have no right and no need to interfere in this war. They should have either supported the side that is protecting most of Muslims --the British-- or stayed neutral. This is what reason and humanity agree to, not what they [the Ottomans] recklessly did by supporting a disgraceful country... Muslims,

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[85] Al-Mughayrī, *Juhaynat al-akhbār,* 421-22.
[86] Although the reason for his abdication has been stated to be his deteriorating health, al-Mughayrī claimed that 'Ali rather abdicated for political reasons. Al-Mughayrī, *Juhaynat al-akhbār,* 421.
[87] See Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islamism,* 68.
[88] Interview, 'Alī Muhsin al-Barwānī, Muscat, Oman, March 27, 2002.
[89] See al-Mughayrī, *Juhaynat al-akhbār,* 474-76 and F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, 119. This statement must have been a direct response to the Ottoman Sultan's proclamation of *jihād*, urging Muslims everywhere to unite and defend their dynasty against the Entente.

> all subjects of Zanzibar and I declare that we hold tight to bonds of unity and display loyalty and allegiance to King George and Queen Mary...[90]

It is not clear what effect Sultan Khalīfa's statement had on Muslims in Zanzibar and East Africa and to what degree he was able to change their allegiance by publicly announcing his loyalty to the British. While al-Mughayrī spoke about letters of support to the Sultan from Arab leaders in East Africa in response to this statement,[91] he also spoke about the many Arabs who gathered in Tabora to support the Sultan-in-exile, Khālid, in his efforts to aid the Germans – then allies to the Ottomans -- against the British.[92]

Zanzibar and Islamic Reform in the Mashriq

Like the rest of the Muslim world, the Mashriq was witnessing religious renewal and reform movements, the most well-known of which was the Salafiyya movement based in Egypt and led by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Ridā. As we have described it above, the Salafiyya promoted unity of Muslims and reform in Islam by a return to the fundamentals of religion as practiced during the era of the *salaf*. In essence, its platform was similar to that of many reform movements in the Muslim world, including the Ibadi *nahḍa*, but differed substantially in its modernist approach. Islamic modernism did not only attempt to seek renewal and reform but to integrate Islam with modernism or at least articulate ways for a potential integration. The Omani elite, through its various contacts with the Mashriq and through its exposure to modernist literature, was influenced by the Salafiyya, to which, in return, the elite was extending assistance.

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[90] Al-Mughayrī, *Juhaynat al-akhbā,r* 475.
[91] Ibid., 476.
[92] Ibid., 479.

Salafi currents made their way into Zanzibar in the late nineteenth century and as will be demonstrated, members of the Omani elite, including the Sultans, were exposed to them. According to Muḥsin al-Barwānī, Sayyid Mānṣab Abu Bakr bin Sālim (1863-1927) was in direct contact with Rashīd Ridā and his movement in Egypt. Sayyid Manṣab was closely related to the last Sultan of the Comoros, and was one of the oldest artists in Zanzibar, who studied art with an English missionary woman. Another member who came under the influence of the Salafi ideology was 'Īsa bin 'Alī, al-Barwānī's uncle, described by his nephew 'as religious but with a secular approach'.[93] He kept photos of Muḥammad 'Abduh and al-Afghānī and read *al-Manār*, which was already known to a number of Zanzibaris, including their Sultans, and was probably found in the library of the Arab Association.[94] Moreover, there were a number of Egyptians residing in Zanzibar since the late nineteenth century and they were known for their sympathies to modernist Islam. One of them was Muḥammad Luṭfī, author of a book on the European capitulations in Egypt, and a supporter of modernist views that he discussed with young Zanzibaris in Jum`a mosque in Zanzibar.[95] Some Zanzibaris used to call the Salafis *ahl al-Manār* (the people of *al-Manār* -- *al-Manār* being the voice of Salafism), and some looked down at them as they were considered very rational and similar to the Mu'tazila, a controversial medieval theological movement known for favoring reason at the expense of the authoritative text.

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] See Pouwels, "Sh. al-Amin b. Ali Mazrui,": 342 and Al-Zirikli, *al-A'lām*, vol. 5, 59. The readership for *al-Manār* grew in the 1920's as direct correspondence from some Zanzibaris started to appear on the pages of *al-Manār*.

The Sultans themselves were not isolated from those Salafi currents and more important, they seem to have been known for their openness towards them. This prompted some pioneers of the Salafiyya movement to contact the Sultans and ask for financial assistance to help run their journals. Rashīd Ridā was one of those who contacted Sultan Ḥmūd asking for such assistance. On October 3, 1901 he sent the Sultan the following letter:

> After the preamble…
> I am a man from the family of the Prophet who was educated in science and religion. I wanted to use my religious and scientific knowledge to offer advice to the Muslim *umma*, and warn it about its spiritual and social aches that made it deviate and put behind other nations. I see that the only means by which I spread advice is through the press, in form of newspapers and magazines, and for this purpose I founded *al-Manār* in Egypt about four years ago. I started dispatching it to all countries without having agents and collectors, and counted on contributions only. Many did not send even one *dirham* and thus I had to borrow money. Since *al-Manār* has been sent to your majesty since its establishment, and since asking rulers for help was not shameful, especially for such an honorable service –and you are best known among Muslim rulers for your support for knowledge- I write this [letter] as a reminder for your majesty; and a reminder benefits believers.[96]

Further evidence of the Zanzibari Sultans' reputation as supporters and sponsors of religious movements and scholars was a letter sent from the manager of *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa*. *Al-'Urwa* was established by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1839-1897) and Muḥammad 'Abduh in Paris in 1884 to be the voice of their secret society, aiming at working for the unity of Muslims and the reform of Islam. The letter read:

> Al- 'Urwa al-Wuthqa
> A Journal in Service of Islamic Union
>
> Greetings… to the pillar of Islam, to the greatest of the Sultans and of the generous Emirs… my Master 'Ali bin Ḥmūd, Sultan of Zanzibar, may God keep him…

[96] AA5/27, Zanzibari Archives, Department of Archives and Documents, dated Jumada 2, 1319 (October 3, 1901).

> 'A faithful for a faithful is like a strongly cemented structure, supporting each other'... we have decorated our Islamic journal, that has been founded to support Islamic unity, with your Highness' picture and an acknowledgment of your noble deeds and shining benefits... and hereby we are sending some issues of *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa*, hoping that your Highness will aid this splendid project and great endeavor that is beneficiary for all Muslims. We also hope that you will distribute some issues of this journal in your circles...[97]
>
> Manager of *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa*
> Bashīr bin Fatḥ Allah

Both *al-'Urwa* and *al-Manār*, however, did more than debate unity and reform. They criticized the colonial powers, especially Britain and its occupation of Egypt and the Sudan in the case of *al-'Urwa*. Although *al-'Urwa* was prevented from entering countries under British control, it obviously made its way to Zanzibar and straight to the court, and as the content of the letter reveals, it received the support of the Sultans.

This relationship with the Salafiyya movement seemed to have taken a new turn when Nāṣir al-Lamkī visited Egypt some time between 1900 and 1901, and met with some of Muḥammad 'Abduh's pupils, and more significantly with 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī.[98] Al-Kawākibī was a Syrian *'ālim* from Aleppo who had moved to Egypt in 1898 after he fell out of favor with the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul, where he previously resided. He is considered one of the most renowned Muslim

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[97] AA5/11-51, Zanzibari Archives, Department of Archives and Documents, letter dated 26 Sha'bān, 1322 H. (November 05, 1904).

[98] Interview, Sa'īd b. Muḥammad al-Riyāmī, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, April 19, 2002. In addition to al-Lamkī's trip to the Mashriq, there is one by the famous poet and writer Abī al-Hārith Muḥammad bin 'Alī al-Barwānī (1878-1953). Muḥammad al-Barwānī was born in Zanzibar, where he perfected Arabic, using his family's rich private library, and where he learned English as well. See Āsia al-Bū'alī, "Maqāmāt al-Barwānī," *Nizwa* 24(October, 2000): 50-51. He is known to have been a gifted writer in Arabic who excelled in a medieval form of story writing known as *al-maqāmāt*. The only two pieces of his works that seem to have survived are *al-maqāmāt* and his *riḥla* (trip), known as *riḥlat Abī al-Hārith* (the Trip of Abī al-Hārith). Muḥammad bin 'Alī al-Barwānī, *Rihlat Abī al-Hārith* (Zanjubār: Maṭba'at al-Najāḥ, 1915). His journey to the Mashriq took place in 1914, visiting Suez, Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, Jaffa and Jerusalem. Abī al-Hārith provided vivid description of each city, its landmarks and customs. His travel description was published the next year in Zanzibar by *al-Najāh* press, run by al-Bahlānī. For more information, see Scott S. Reese, "The Adventures of Abū Ḥārith: Muslim Travel Writing and

reformers of the late nineteenth century as he, like many others, inspected the roots of weakness among Arabs and Muslims. He was a strong opponent of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's despotism and support for what he called a false spirit of religion based on superstition and blind imitation.[99] In Egypt, al-Kawākibī started to publish his political and religious thoughts on political corruption and religious reform in *al-Mu'ayyad*. He elaborated on those ideas in a book he published a year later entitled *Ṭabā'i' al-istibdād wa maṣāri' al-isti'bād* (Characteristics of Corruption and the Annihilation of Subjugation). It is also said that al-Lamkī had the chance to discuss with al-Kawākibī some of his ideas in *ṭabā'i' al-istibdād*, excerpts of which al-Lamkī had probably read in *al-Mu'ayyad*, also circulating in Zanzibar and with which al-Lamkī used to correspond.[100] This meeting between al-Lamkī and al-Kawākibī might have intrigued the latter to visit Zanzibar and the East African coast in 1901 and the opportunity and funding to do so might have been provided by the pan-Islamist Khedive 'Abbas II of Egypt.[101]

Unfortunately, few details on that trip are available and whatever al-Kawākibī recorded about it seems to have been confiscated with other documents from al-Kawākibī's house right after his death. What is available on that trip is a letter al-Kawākibī had sent to his family while he was 500 miles away from Pemba,[102] and an

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Navigating the Modern in Colonial East Africa," *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa*, 244-256.

[99] See Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 271-273 and Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism*, 23-24.

[100] See *al-Mu'ayyad* (February, 1908), 3.

[101] Hourani suggested that al-Kawakibī "might have undertaken his journeys on his [Khedive 'Abbas] behalf and in furtherance of his ideas of an Arab caliphate." Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 272. It is doubtful that al-Kawākibī's trip to East Africa was to propagate the idea of an Arab Caliphate. Despite his criticism of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, al-Kawākibī did not call for a break-up of the Ottoman dynasty or for its disunity. See Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism*, 24.

[102] Muḥammad Jamīl Taḥḥān, ed., *Al-a'māl al-kāmila lil-kawākibī* (The Complete Works of al-Kawākibī) (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥda al-'Arabiyya, 1995), 548-49.

article in *al-Manār* published in 1905 by Rashīd Ridā --a close friend of al-Kawākibī.[103] The letter sent to his sons, however, had some intriguing hints. First, the trip seemed to have been conducted secretly, as al-Kawākibī instructed his sons not to reveal his destination to anyone except his friend 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Jawda.[104] Second, he informed his sons that "[I am] struggling now in life for the sake of the comfort and leisure of my family. May God forgive my father for not teaching me a certain profession! However, I thank God for helping me gain money to pay for the trip expenses... and there is much hope for me in the near future."[105] He subsequently emphasized that he anticipated much out of this trip. It is not clear why al-Kawākibī did not want to reveal his destination and the purpose of the trip to East Africa. If the assumption that it was Khedive 'Abbas who financed al-Kawākibī's trip was true then the trip must have, most probably, been undertaken to promote pan-Islamism and, perhaps, anti-colonialism – anti-British more specifically. If 'Abbas II was known for anything it was his pan-Islamic and anti-British position.[106] Whatever the case, a visit by someone like al-Kawākibī to Zanzibar only served to assert the Arab-Islamic aspiration of the island and enhance its reputation as a member of the Arab-Muslim world.

In addition to individuals and movements active in Egypt, the Zanzibari court had nourished a special relationship with the editors of *Jarīdat Tarābuls al-Shām* (The Tripoli of Syria Newspaper). In a letter dated September 1899, Muḥammad Kāmil al-Buḥayrī, editor of the *jarīda* sent Sultan Ḥmūd a copy of a book that he described as

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[103] *Al-Manār*, 8 (1905), 854-60.
[104] Ṭahhān, *al-A'māl al-kāmila*, 548.
[105] Ibid.
[106] See Vatikiotis, *The Modern History of Egypt*, 201-203.

"a book in the science of Unity, refuting the uncertainties of philosophers and authored by the scholar Shaykh Ḥusayn al-Jisr. The book has earned a great reputation in the Muslim world."[107] This book must have been *al-Ḥuṣūn al-Ḥamīdiyya* (Hamidian Fortresses). Its author, Ḥusayn al-Jisr, was born in 1845 in Tripoli, Lebanon, and was a member of a renowned family with a leading role in the Khalwatiyya Order. Ḥusayn received his education in Tripoli before he left for al-Azhar at the age of eighteen, and where he stayed for more than four years. He returned to Tripoli in 1867 to look after his family and to head the khalwati *tariqa* after his uncle's death. His first contribution was the establishment of a modern school in Tripoli called the National Islamic School, the first in Tripoli to combine religious studies with modern sciences and foreign languages.[108] The school was not open for long and Ḥusayn had to move to Beirut where he headed another school for one more year.

It is his residency in Beirut that was to shape his intellectual endeavor. First, he pursued his interest in modern sciences about which he read at the Syrian Protestant College (currently the American University of Beirut) which housed related books translated into Arabic. Second, that same year (1883) in Beirut Muḥammad 'Abduh delivered his famous lectures that became the basis of his book on the Theology of Unity. It was al-Jisr's golden opportunity to link up with 'Abduh. Al-Jisr retuned to Tripoli where he devoted his time to writing, and his first publications appeared in 1888. Upon the publication of *al-Risāla al-Ḥamīdiyya*, which is an exposé of Muslim doctrine and a refutation of materialist theories, he was summoned to Istanbul, where

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[107] Zanzibari Archives in Oman, AA 5/11-10, letter dated Jumāda 5, 1317 (September 11, 1899).

he was received by Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II. Al-Jisr spent nine months in Istanbul, where he published *al-Ḥuṣūn al-Ḥamīdiyya*, an addendum to the *Risāla*. It was not by accident that al-Jisr was dedicating his writings to 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. He, like many other scholars of his time, answered the Ottoman Sultan's call to support the Ottoman rule and defend it. For al-Jisr, his defense of Islam was carried out in the name of his Sultan. While a resident in Istanbul, he sought permission for his friend Muḥammad Kāmil al-Buḥayrī to launch the aforementioned newspaper. Al-Jisr spent the remaining years editing that newspaper, especially its opening statement. He died in 1909.[109]

Al-Jisr, despite his conservative leanings towards some theological issues, symbolized a new generation of ulama who opened their minds to modern sciences and saw it indispensable to integrate what was new with what was traditional. The circulation of his book in Zanzibar or at least the exposure of the Zanzibari elite to its content and context revealed the degree to which those on the island who read Arabic were exposed to the different theological and intellectual debates about reform occurring in the Mashriq.

Al-Jisr's *Ṭarābuls* and its editors showed exceptional interest in Zanzibar and its affairs. Ḥikmat Sharīf, a historian, a prolific writer, and columnist for that newspaper,[110] ran a series of short articles about Zanzibar in 1900.[111] Those articles were reproduced in a book format a year later, upon the request of Ḥmūd, under the

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[108] Logic, mathematics and natural sciences, translated into Arabic, were included in the curriculum in addition to French and Turkish languages. See Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 223.
[109] Khālid Ziyāda, *Al-Shaykh Ḥusayn al-Jisr (1845-1909): ḥayātuh wa fikruh* (Shaykh Ḥusayn al-Jisr: His Life and Thought) (Tripoli: Dār al-Inshā', 1982).
[110] Al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, Vol. 2, 268.
[111] See *Jarīdat Ṭarabuls* (1900), from vol. 344 until vol. 383.

title *Kitāb tārīkh Zanjubār*,[112](History of Zanzibar). The book has a general introduction of Zanzibar's geography, demography, culture and communities, in addition to a description of mainland East Africa, borrowed from H. M. Stanly's account. Sharīf, introducing the book, highlighted what he called the civilization and progress of Zanzibar. He considered this progress part of the *nahḍa* in the East. The author also regarded Ḥmūd's policies towards Zanzibar as attempts to "ward off the greed of Western countries,"[113] and regarded Ḥmūd as an example for the rulers of the Mashriq to follow.[114] These comments are important since Sharīf's correspondence indicated that the book was reviewed and edited before Ḥmūd approved its publication.[115]

More significantly in terms of the Zanzibar-Mashriq tie, the book was the first history of Zanzibar to be written in Arabic. This points to the degree to which Zanzibar was perceived by Arabs in the Mashriq as an extension of their own world. The elite in Zanzibar must have felt the same; otherwise, Ḥmūd would not have had the book published in Syria, and 'Ali would not have continued his support for the newspaper and its editors as correspondence between him and al-Buḥayri revealed.[116]

Zanzibar and the Arab *nahḍa*

The development of the Arab literary *nahḍa* was not in isolation from the development of revival movements within Islam. Many Muslim reformers related the

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[112] Zanzibari Archives, from file AA5/11-145, letter dated 17 Rabī' 1, 1318 (July 9, 1899). This letter also indicates that Ḥmūd's request to publish the book was issued in 24 Ramadan 1317, (January 27, 1900). There also seem to have been a second edition of the book published in October 1901. See AA5/11-224, letter dated Rajab 1, 1319 (October 14, 1901).
[113] Sharīf, *Tārīkh Zanjubār*, 5-6.
[114] Ibid.
[115] See AA5/11-145

revival of Islam to a revival in the role of Arabs and envisioned the revival of Muslim civilization as being conditioned by the revival of Arab civilization.[117] In other words, the *salaf,* the ideal generation, was Arab and thus, Islamic reform necessitated a leading role for Arabs. Muslim reformers, however, were not the only contributors to the *nahḍa.* A number of its pioneers were of the Christian faith, and their immense contribution to the Arab *nahḍa* has been well-documented and widely acknowledged.[118] Most of them recognized and even highlighted the role of Islam in creating Arab civilization and more important, did not consider the Arab renaissance as a challenge to the integrity of the Ottoman dynasty, to which they had allegiance, but rather regarded it in line with Ottoman reform policies of the nineteenth/twentieth century.[119] The Zanzibari Sultans corresponded with several of those writers and intellectuals who spearheaded that *nahḍa*, and more significantly, financed some of their works. That correspondence and the financial assistance were ways through which the Omani elite articulated its Arab-Muslim identity and bonded with the Arab revival movement.

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[116] A letter from file number AA5/25, dated 19 Rabī'1, 1320 (26 June, 1902). Al-Buḥayrī indicated to Sultan 'Alī that his journal covered the 'celebration', obviously 'Alī's coronation a week after his father's death.

[117] For more information, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* C. Ernest Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1973), especially chapter 5. Some Muslim reformers, such as 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Kawākibī, went even further and bluntly accused the Ottomans for being responsible for the corruption of Islam and Islamic societies..

[118] See Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism,*132, 140-47, Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 95-102.

[119] Arab Christians in general did not hold separatist views although there was an active minority among them who was antagonistic towards the Ottoman rule. Their ideas however were not very popular among Christian communities and did not win support until after the collapse of the Ottoman Dynasty. See Ibid. For this purpose, the Arab cultural *nahḍa*, a movement better labeled in this context as Arabism, should not be confused with Arab nationalism, a political phenomenon that emerged in the Arab world after the collapse of the Ottoman dynasty following World War I, and developed as an anti-colonial ideology seeking independence and unity of all Arabs. It is essential to distinguish between Arabism and Arab nationalism given the political context in which each phenomenon developed. The Arab cultural *nahḍa*, although considered the precursor to Arab nationalism, differed from the latter in

One of those Arabists with whom Omanis frequently corresponded was Jurjī Zaydān (1861-1914), an icon of this Arab *nahḍa*, "who did more than any other to create a consciousness of the Arab past".[120] He was the editor of the Egyptian-based journal *al-Hilāl* (the Crescent) --a journal that enjoyed wide circulation among the Zanzibari elite-- and author of many short stories and books, including *Tārīkh al-adab al-islāmī* (History of Islamic Literature), a popular book in Zanzibar.[121] He communicated regularly with Ḥmūd and 'Alī, and his correspondence consisted primarily of formalities, notification to renew subscription, replies to requests, etc... In a letter dated October 30, 1899 Zaydān expressed regret that his journal had not been the first to make public the news about Ḥmūd's plan to make a trip "to the land of Islam". He requested photographs of Ḥmūd and his son 'Alī for publication in *al-Hilāl*. This was followed by a reminder about an earlier request he had made for sponsorship of his book *Mashāhīr al-sharq* (The Orient's Celebrities).[122] In another letter, Zaydān informed the Sultan, who had asked for an update on a novel he was reading in *al-Hilāl*, that there was no follow-up. The content of the letter may seem trivial but its significance should not be downplayed. Sultan Ḥmūd's subscription to Arabic journals was not a mere formality. He obviously had a serious interest in them and was a careful observer of their content. In this case, we are seeing the reflection of his interest in the literary Arab *nahḍa*.

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its aim and focus. An excellent analysis of both can be found in Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism: from Triumph to Despair*, chapter 1.

[120] Hourani. *Arabic Thought*, 277. For more information on Zaydān and his writings, see Thomas Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan: His Life and Thought* (Beirut: Orient Institute, 1979).

[121] Interview, al-Barwānī, Muscat, March, 2002.

[122] *Mashāhīr al-sharq* (The Orient's Celebrities) is one of Zaydān's most celebrated works, that was published in two volumes and contained biographies of people considered by Zaydān the Sharq's most renowned. Sultan Ḥmūd had not answered Zaydān and thus the latter assumed that the Sultan was not

Zaydān's interest in Zanzibar, however, is even more noteworthy. It is testimony that for him, Zanzibar, despite geography, was part of the Mashriq and politically and ideologically integrated into the larger Arab world. Its Sultans were Arab and thus they symbolized the Arab 'heroism' that Zaydān was seeking. Perhaps, it is that same 'heroism' that prompted Nāṣir al-Lamkī, a prominent member of the Omani elite in Zanzibar and son of the aforementioned Sulaymān, to send *al-Hilāl* a biography of the Omani adventurer Hamīd al-Marjibī, otherwise known as Tippu tip.[123] The piece focused on al-Marjibī's adventures in Central Africa and his role in expanding Omani rule in this largely unknown territory. The introduction to the article in *al-Hilāl*, presumably written by Zaydān himself, was even more interesting than the article. The editor presented al-Marjibī as an Arab hero from among "the geniuses of the *Sharq* [East]...who performed miracles in politics, in prudence and in leadership",[124] and whose efforts to discover the interior of Africa must be revealed to all.[125]

The editor ended his introduction by thanking al-Lamkī for "his earnest concern to make known the achievements of the *Sharqiyyīn* [Easterners]."[126] During a period of Arab self-glorification and resurrection of a celebrated past, it is very significant that Zaydān chose Zanzibar to represent that history, and to remind the Arab world of that golden moment when history witnessed the expansion of Arab rule

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interested in financing his project. It is not clear, however, whether the Sultan ultimately contributed to the publication of the book or not. Zanzibari Archives in Oman. AA5/25

[123] Nāṣir bin Sulaymān al-Lamkī, "Ashhar al-ḥawādith wa a'ẓam al-rijāl: Ḥamīd bin Muḥammad al-Marjabī, fātiḥ al-congo," *Al-Hilāl* 19(July 1906): 571-580. Thanks are due to Michael Frishkopf who photocopied the article for me from Cairo.

[124] Ibid., 571. This conforms to Zaydān's definition of '*al-sharq*' as being the whole Arabic-speaking world.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

in Africa. Al-Marjibī's achievements in East Africa, in his eyes, were Arab 'heroic' achievements worth placing al-Marjibī among the greatest 'celebrities' Zaydān listed in his *Mashāhīr al-sharq,*[127] and among those who helped build the Arab legacy.

Given that this 'adventurer' is far more often portrayed in western literature as at best an entrepreneurial merchant who traded in slaves and built up a slave-based army to further commercial and political interests, at worst a ruthless slave-trader and slave-raider, this glorification of him as an explorer and representative of all that is admirable is all the more remarkable.[128] The biography al-Lamkī sent had a different portrayal. In fact, neither the slave trade nor his slave army was ever mentioned. These were not the 'issues' that mattered to al-Lamkī or the ones that earned al-Marjibī his reputation among Arabs. It was rather his daring efforts to expand Arab rule that mattered the most.

Zaydān was not the only avant-garde of the Arab *nahḍa* to seek and receive the support of the Sultans. Ibrāhīm Nāṣīf al-Yāzijī (1847-1906), a Christian Arab who believed that "[t]he Easterners, or at least the Arabs, instead of being inferior to the Europeans, were the most remarkable of people, a people who had civilized the West,"[129] was in touch with the Sultans as well. His famous work *Nuj'at al-rā'id* (The Hope of the Seeker)[130] was published with the full support of Sultan 'Alī. This was

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[127] Check Jurjī Zaydān, *Mashāhīr al-sharq fī al-qarn al-tāsi' 'ashar*. Vol. 1, in which the information on al-Marjabī was reproduced.

[128] See Leda Farrant, *Tippu Tip and the East African Slave Trade* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975) and Heinrich Brode, *Tippu Tip: The Story of His Career in Zanzibar and Central Africa; Narrated from his Own Accounts*. (Zanzibar: the Gallery Publications, 2000).

[129] Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, 141. For more information on al-Yāzijī's contribution to the Arab *nahḍa* at the turn of the century, see Suleiman, *The Arabic Language*, 96-109.

[130] See Ibrahīm al-Yāzijī, *Nuj' at al-rā'id wa shar' at al-wārid fi al-mutarādif wa al-mutawārid*. ((Maṭba'at al-ma'ārif: Egypt, 1904). The work is an Arabic lexicon. The full text of the lexicon can be found at the following website: http://lexicons.sakhr.com/Section1.asp

revealed in a letter al-Yāzijī dispatched to 'Alī, in which he acknowledged the latter's contribution. The letter reads:

> To 'Alī bin Ḥmūd,
>
> With Allah's help and your help, the first volume of *Nuj'at al-Rā'id*, a book that you helped me publish for the sake of the students of Arab language, had been released. I hereby present one copy for you, hoping you would accept it and place it in your library…
>
> Cairo, 25 Safar 1323. (April 30, 1905) [131]

Another contributor to the *nahḍa* who made contacts with the Zanzibari court was 'Abd al-Masīḥ Antākī (1874-1923), a Christian Arab. He was born in Aleppo and then resided in Egypt, where he founded and edited *al-'Umrān* journal. He was known for his support of the Ottoman reforms and wrote in praise of the Ottoman Constitution. Like other Christian Arabs of his time, he spent his career resurrecting the splendor of the Arab past and for that purpose he wrote a poem glorifying the early history of Islam.[132] Ḥmūd subscribed to *al-'Umrān* as well and had shown interest in sending al-Intākī a biography and a picture of himself to be published in that journal.[133] *Majallat al-tārīkh* (the journal of History), also published by al-Inṭākī, was generously financed by Ḥmūd as well.[134]

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[131] Ibrāhīm, al-Yāzijī, "Rasā'il Ibrāhīm al-Yāzijī." TMs (photocopy), #1365. Jaffet Library, American University of Beirut.

[132] Al-Ziriklī, *Al-A'lām* , vol. 4, 153-54.

[133] Unsorted Document, dated 11 dhi al-Qi'da 1318 (March 02, 1901)

[134] Ibid. The Sultans subscribed to a number of journals including *al-Ikhlās, al-Inṣāf, al-Kawthar, al-Maḥrūsa, Thamarāt al-Funūn, al-Sa'āda, al-Ma'lumāt wa Tharwat…* The extent to which Zanzibar aroused the interest of Arabic speaking people was remarkable. For example, Ḥmūd's known interest in supporting the *nahḍa* encouraged a medical doctor named Ibrahīm bin Yūsuf 'Irbaylī, a resident of the United States, to send him a letter in 1896/97, presenting a copy of a book he wrote there, in which 'Irbaylī explained Arab history and language. He told Ḥmūd that he wrote that book to counter the criticism of Arab civilization by Americans. He suggested to the Sultan that he should open a modern hospital in Zanzibar and offered to manage it. Document from file # AA5/46, dated Dhī al-Qi'da, 1314 (April 21, 1897). An unidentified correspondent sent Sultan Ḥmūd a letter from Egypt dated 14 March 1897, in which he complained to Sultan Ḥmūd that while each country was represented in Egypt by

Those Arabists, though not Muslims, converged with Salafis on the need to highlight the splendor of the early history of Islam and to assert that Arabs were capable again of reincarnating that history. Much of their discourse, like that of Salafis, was geared toward underscoring the presence of a full-fledged Arab civilization long before the European one. The involvement of the Omani elite in Zanzibar in this cultural renaissance of Arabs upheld neo-Ibadism in terms of arousing the interest of Ibadis, whether Omani Arabs or Mizabi Berbers, in the resurrection of the Arab heritage for the sake of promoting the legacy of Islam. But it would be misleading to interpret the interest of Omanis in Arabism from the sole perspective of neo-Ibadism. Their endorsement of the Arab *nahḍa* reflects their awareness of their role as 'Arabs' in encouraging all efforts that aim at cherishing Arab history and the Arabic language.

The Omani Elite, *nahḍas* and Ideological Resistance to Colonialism

An argument has been made above that pan-Ibadism developed under circumstances much shaped by colonialism and that pan-Ibadism was accompanied by a neo-Ibadi approach. And neo-Ibadism, much like pan-Ibadism if not even more evidently, was largely in response to colonial challenges. The colonial experience that spurred reform and renewal in all those societies created a common ground on which Muslims met. Unity of Muslims, as we have seen in the case of Aṭfiyyash, al-Sālimī and the Salafis, was considered a major step toward Islamic reform. Colonialism created a heightened need to seek a collective Muslim identity that transcended

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political and literary parties, with journals speaking on their behalf, Zanzibar was not. That correspondent offered to take it upon himself, in cooperation with a certain Hāmid Ibrahīm, editor of the Egyptian newspaper *al-Kamāl* and apparently of Zanzibari origin, to represent Zanzibar and

sectarianism. Many scholars and rulers put that into practice and moved from rhetoric to application by supporting and building bridges with their counterparts from the other sect.

The interest of Zanzibari Sultans in forging relations with scholars such as Aṭfiyyash, with writers and press editors in the *nahḍa* movements in the Mashriq as well as with the Ottoman court is indicative of their attempts to invest in their ties with the Arab world and strengthen them with its renaissance movements. Given the nature of the correspondents from both the Maghrib and Mashriq and given the zealous support they received from Zanzibari Sultans, those relationships, much as pan-Ibadism, had a 'meaning' that should be sought in the realm of ideological resistance to colonialism. What is crucial here is the fact that those Sultans, with their support for Muslim reformers and Arab intellectuals taking pride in their identity, as either Muslims or Arabs or both, were in effect sponsoring movements that were anti-colonial or very protective of the Arab/Islamic identity in face of colonialism.

This observation defies the usual portrayal of Zanzibari Sultans as mere 'collaborators' with the colonial order in Zanzibar and as 'puppets' in the hands of colonial officials.[135] While there is no denying that the interests of both the Omani elite and the colonial order in Zanzibar became interwoven and interdependent, by expanding the intellectual and political terrain of that elite as we have done here, we

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introduce its history to the general public. Zanzibari Archives in Oman AA 5/11-195, letter dated 21 Shawwāl, 1315 (March 14, 1898).

[135] This has been a standard depiction of the Sultans of Zanzibar in the literature, in the context of their relation with British colonizers since most studies available on al-Busa'īdī rule in Zanzibar have focused on its political and economic aspects almost exclusively. See, for instance, Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), Bennett, *The Arab State*, Michael Lofchie. *Zanzibar* and Abdul Sheriff and Ed. Ferguson, eds., *Zanzibar under Colonial Rule* (London: Ohio University Press, 1991). Hollingworth, for example, describing Ḥmūd,

can understand the nature of these interests differently. British influence and colonialism in Zanzibar was never welcomed with open arms and several episodes as well as reactions from the Sultans or other members of the Omani elite were a testimony to that antagonism. Thus, the relationship with the colonial order was a complex one, involving co-operation at some levels but resistance at others.

If we were to contextualize the interest of the Sultans themselves in the *nahḍa* movements, whether the Ibadi *nahḍa* in Oman and Algeria or the Mashriqi *nahḍa*, manifesting itself in the emergence of progressive religious discourses on one hand and attempts to revive the Arabic heritage on the other hand, we find it in the anti-colonial sphere. The different *nahḍas* converged on the same concerns: the need to empower, to progress and to seek unity. One root of those concerns was a colonizing Europe, threatening all aspects of traditional life, the political entity and the religious pride. Zanzibar was not immune to those threats and one way to resist them was to adopt and support those *nahḍas*. The Sultans were at the forefront of this battle and their 'agency' as the rulers in a British protectorate did not alter their expected role as also 'protectors' of Islam and of the Arabic heritage.

This support provided for Ibadis and non-Ibadis, Islamists and Arabists, had placed Zanzibar at the center --in a rather symbolic manner-- of the Arab Muslim world. For Maghribi Ibadis, Zanzibar was a member of the same community, and for Mashriqis, Zanzibar became an extension of their Arab Mashriq, as it represented 'Arab' glory, and more or less, defiance. Moreover, the Ibadi *nahḍa* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries owed much to Zanzibar as did the Arab religious and literate

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wrote that the Sultan "found it prudent to maintain during the six years of his reign an attitude of complete docility towards his British advisors." Hollingworth, *Zanzibar under the Foreign Office*, 131.

nahḍa of the Mashriq. In return, Islamic reform and Arabism became a trademark of Zanzibari intellectual life at the turn of the century and were to leave lasting traces on Zanzibar's Arab literati. That impact and those traces are to be found in the works and career of Abū Muslim Nāṣir al-Rawāḥī al-Bahlānī.

Chapter IV
Nāṣir al-Baḥlānī: "a man in a nation and a nation in a man"

Introduction

In his biography of Lord Cromer of Egypt, Roger Owen finds a biographical approach to be a good representation of how issues related to globalization and imperialism "present themselves, albeit in a somewhat higgledy-piggledy fashion, in the compass of an individual life."[1] No one in turn-of-the-century Zanzibar could represent, in the compass of his individual life, global Islam and some of its reactions to both colonialism and imperialism more than Abū Muslim Nāṣir al-Bahlānī (1860-1920).[2]

Well-versed in Arabic --of which he had a powerful command-- he had earned the title of 'the poet of Arabs'. His poetry, written in a style resembling that of the golden literary age of the 'Abbasid period in its strength, novelty, and statement of purpose, was the medium through which he expressed most of his ideas about Islamic reform, Islamic unity and anti-colonialism. Reckoning on poetry as the ultimate form of expression had been an Omani practice *par excellence*, traditionally used instead of prose to elucidate on a wide range of religious topics, including detailed matters of jurisprudence. Al-Bahlānī, however, mastered this art with a different purpose in mind: to express his views on the state of Islam and Muslims, to warn against Islam's 'enemies', to bolster the cause of the Imamate, to call on his fellow Muslims to renew their religious zeal, and to motivate them to protect Islam at all costs. He regarded himself as a poet with a mission and envisioned his role as being similar to that of

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[1] Owen, "Using Present Day Notions of Imperialism, Globalization and Internationalism," 8.

[2] Here, I borrow Ho's definition of colonialism as being "foreign presence in, possession of, and domination over bounded, local places," and of imperialism being "foreign domination, without the necessity of presence or possession, over expansive, transnational spaces—and many places". See Ho, "Empire through Diasporic Eyes": 211.

Ḥassān bin Thābit, the first poet of Islam and of its Prophet Muḥammad.[3] If Ḥassān's role was to defend and glorify Islam and its Prophet, al-Bahlānī's role was to shield Islam and venerate the Ibadi *nahḍa*.

In addition to being a celebrated poet, he was a jurist, a judge, and a press editor. He was an *'ālim* in the true sense of the meaning, one who envisioned a central role for himself in a changing world: that of a reformer. This chapter analyzes different genres of al-Bahlānī's writings in order to explore that role and in order to shed light on his religious and political thought that defined his vision of reform. His line of thought, as revealed through his poetry, his correspondence and his journalistic endeavor, embodied pan-Ibadism, neo-Ibadism, pan-Islamism, and Islamic renewal and reform, and testified to their prevalence in Zanzibar. For al-Bahlānī, those trends were the tools with which he could awaken Muslims to present and impending threats of colonialism to their religion, values and moralities. He skillfully employed his exposure to global Islam to articulate the need to reform Islam and more significantly, the need for a universal Muslim *nahḍa* akin to the Ibadi *nahḍa* in Oman in order to defeat the enemy. For that purpose, Ibadism, in his thought, not only intersected with pan-Islamism but was also an inspirational anti-colonial ideology that would do service to all Muslims. The Omani *nahḍa*, in that context, was his proto-model and the first step on the path to restore the much lamented and sought after old prowess of Islam. The intersection between an Ibadi *nahḍa* and a pan-Islamic one and the need for that *nahḍa* to defeat colonialism and overcome the weakness of Muslims account for the anti-colonial reformist thought in Zanzibar as articulated by a member of the Omani elite.

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[3] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 270.

The *'ālim* -Poet: A Background

His full name was Nāṣir bin Sālim bin 'Udayyim al-Bahlānī al-Rawāḥī, and known by the nickname of Abū Muslim.[4] He was born in 1860[5] in Maḥram, a village in the Samā'il valley in Oman where he received a traditional religious education at the *kuttāb* (a Quranic school at an elementary level).[6] He later sought education at mosques, where students were introduced to advanced studies in jurisprudence, theology and Arabic. His first mentor was his father Sālim al-Rawāḥī, a judge and appointed governor in Nizwa under Qays bin 'Azzān.[7] He was also tutored by a local scholar Muḥammad bin Salīm al-Rawāhī. His immediate teachers, however, were not the only source of influence that shaped his intellect. Al-Bahlānī was an admirer of the nineteenth century scholar Sa'īd bin Khalfān al-Khalīlī, the mastermind behind the first *nahḍa* led by 'Azzān, a prolific writer, a talented poet, and a gifted politician. al-Bahlānī was only ten year old when al-Khalīlī was killed. Nonetheless, al-Bahlānī cherished al-Khalīlī's memory as a rebel, a hero, a reformer, and a martyr for a noble cause. It would not be an exaggeration to say that al-Bahlānī perceived his role as being similar to, or a continuation of al-Khalīlī's in terms of leadership in religious renewal and support for the Ibadi Imamate. This connectedness between the two was clearly revealed in al-Bahlānī's elaboration on al-Khalīlī's famous poem *Sumūṭ al-*

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[4] It has been wrongly suggested that al-Bahlāni refers to Bahla, the famous city in the Interior of Oman, as stated, for example, in the preface to his *nūthār al-jawhar*. See Nāṣir bin Sālim bin 'Udayyim al-Rawāḥī, *Nithār al-jawhar fī 'ilm al-shar' al-azhar*. (Oman, n.d.). Al-Bahlānī is rather a branch of the Banī Rawāha tribe in Oman, which had originally migrated from Yemen. See Muḥammad al-Maḥrūqī, *Al-Shi'r al-'umānī al-ḥadīth: Abū-Muslim al-Bahlānī rā'idan 1860-1920* (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-'Arabī, 1999-2000), 64.

[5] This seems to be the exact date of his birthday, unlike the one provided by al-Ziriklī and other biographers.

[6] That was the only education available in Oman well into the 1940s.

[7] As previously mentioned, Nāṣir's father was among those who signed the letter that was dispatched to the Maghrib, informing Ibadi communities about the establishment of the Imamate government. See al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-a'yān*, vol. 2, 261-63.

thanā' (Poems of Praise) in the form of *takhmīs* (Quintet). He added to each couplet written by al-Khalīli a tiercet of verses, with al-Khalīlī's original verse as the main core and the central theme. It is not a coincidence that al-Khalīlī's poem on which al-Bahlānī elaborated called upon Omanis to rebel against their enemies and their oppressors who spoiled the Sharī'a.[8]

After the collapse of 'Azzān's rule, al-Bahlānī's father moved to Zanzibar in 1878, where he functioned as a Qāḍī under Sultan Barghash, and his son moved along with him.[9] Four years later, al-Bahlānī returned to Oman and stayed until 1888, before he decided to go back to Zanzibar, where he was to spend the rest of his life, never visiting Oman again. His decision to return to Zanzibar seemed to have been motivated by two factors. Apparently, he suffered in Oman from a financial hardship that made him subject to intimidation.[10] The other reason could have been his inability to acclimatize himself in Oman. Having lived in cosmopolitan Zanzibar and experienced its thriving intellectual life, Oman seemed too remote a place for him. It was neither satisfying nor rewarding, either financially or intellectually. Zanzibar must have been a far more attractive and gratifying place for him.

Upon his return, he was first appointed Qāḍī and then promoted to a Chief Qāḍī, representing the Ibadi *madhhab* in Zanzibar. His long career in the judicial system came to an end in 1907, when he was asked --or perhaps forced-- by Peter

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[8] The poem is entitled *Dark al-munā fi takhmīs sumūṭ al-thanā* and can be found among his collection of poetry assembled in the third edition of his *diwān*. See 'Alī al-Najdī Nāṣif, *Dīwān Abī Muslim al-Bahlānī*, vol. 1(Muscat: Wizārat al-turāth al-qawmī wa al-thaqāfa, 1980), 153-176. Beside his admiration of al-Khalīlī, al-Bahlānī was also a close and life-long friend of al-Khalīlī's son Aḥmad.

[9] It is reported that Sālim al-Rawāhī, Nāṣir's father, had published some works but none of them seems to have been published or even recovered. See Mufti Ahmad bin Ḥamad al-Khalīli. "Al-Bahlānī faqīhan wa adīban" (al-Bahlani: jurist and literate) in *Qirā'āt fi fikr al-Bahlānī al-Rawāḥī*. Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ṣulaybi (ed.) (Muscat: Wizārat al-turāth al-qawmi wa al-thaqafi, 1998):

[10] al-Maḥrūqi, *Al-Shi'r al-'umāni al-ḥadīth*,

Crane to retire.[11] It is reported that he performed the pilgrimage once, during which it is reported he met the Algerian scholar Aṭfiyyash. He died in Zanzibar in 1920.

Armed with his father's reputation and his own talents, al-Bahlānī made his way into the Sultans' closest circles. He was particularly very close to Sultan Ḥamad, who severed his relationship with al-Bahlānī as a result of some court intrigues. Al-Bahlānī rectified the situation by sending Ḥamad two praise poems in which he extolled the Sultan's piety and courage.[12] The other Sultan who seemed to have extended special courtesy to al-Bahlānī was Sultan Ḥmūd, who invited him along on his trip to East Africa in 1898, the details of which al-Bahlānī recorded in *al-Lawāmi' al-barqiyya*. His introduction to this book recalled the glory of the al-Busa'īdī dynasty under the leadership of Sayyid Sa'īd, whose death he lamented. He found comfort, however, in Sa'īd's successors, especially in Sultan Ḥmūd.[13] One feature of Ḥmūd's rule, he commented, was his ability to balance between "his duties toward foreign countries and his official and royal rights",[14] which he protected in a zealous manner. This act of balancing was important in the eyes of al-Bahlānī and was, for sure, a characteristic worthy of his praise. Nevertheless, these were the only two Sultans (Sa'īd excluded) in whose praise al-Bahlānī wrote and in both cases, the poems came as a response to a certain occasion. While the first was more of an apology, the second was a commentary on the trip undertaken by Sultan Ḥmūd to East Africa, accompanied by al-Bahlānī. Eulogies for 'rulers', except for those of the *nahḍa*, remained marginal in his career as a poet and were not a craft that al-Bahlānī

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[11] Zanzibari Archives, 5030/2/11.
[12] al-Bustānī, *Diwān*, 58-68.
[13] Al-Rawāḥī, *al-Lawāmi' al-barqiyya*, 1-3.
[14] Ibid., 7.

cultivated. The only issues that were of concern to him were Islam, the *nahḍa* and the threat of the 'enemy'.

Poetry remained the only medium of expression he practiced until 1910 when Nāṣir bin Sulaymān al-Lamkī and al-Bahlānī launched the first Arabic newspaper in Zanzibar. The title of the newspaper was *al-Najāḥ* (success), being the mouthpiece of a party they established called *al-Iṣlāḥ* (reform) party. The newspaper is described as being "national,[15] literary, scientific, informative, historical, and commercial," published thrice a month and edited by al-Bahlānī himself. This newspaper, published in an Arabic version only until 1914,[16] represented Arabic-speaking Zanzibaris, and more specifically Omanis. Hence, al-Bahlānī did not fail to note that his newspaper dealt with 'commercial' aspects, catering to the land-owning and entrepreneurial class of Omanis. *Al-Najāḥ* could provide a wealth of information on Zanzibari Arab history at the turn of the century and a peep into al-Bahlānī's political and religious thought, had its volumes been recovered.

Only one copy of *al-Najāḥ* survived, rendering the task of undertaking a comprehensive analysis of its mission, content and purpose a difficult one. That one copy,[17] however, provides a sample of *al-Najāḥ*'s agenda and concerns and can

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[15] National here is a translation of the Arabic term *waṭaniyya*. One has to be careful not to exaggerate its meaning in that context and in that time framework. It definitely meant interest in his *waṭan* Zanzibar, and possibly Oman, and does not carry any strictly 'nationalist' connotations. *Waṭan*, then, simply designated a territory or people with a common interest. The same observation has been made in terms of the use of this word in the study of nationalism in the Arab world. See, Yasir Suleiman, *The Arabic Language*, especially p.18 and his discussion of the term as was elaborated by the Azhari educator Ḥasan al-Marṣafi (1815-90). However, the term was to gain an additional significance after the First World War. See chapter 5.

[16] Nāṣir bin Sulaymān al-Lamkī took over the editorship of *al-Najāḥ* in 1914. However, he was exiled to India in July of the same year and with his exile, *al-Najāḥ* ceased publication. It was to reappear later in 1929 under the title *al-Falaq*.

[17] The only issue available is dated December 22, 1911. It is number 8 in the first year of publication. The copy is found in the ministry of Culture and Heritage in file number 5482/11, and another copy can

provide an idea about its editor's take on issues of relevance to him, and presumably to the audience of *al-Najāḥ* as well. The available copy happens to be the one commemorating the succession of Sultan Khalīfa bin Ḥārib, the second last Sultan of Zanzibar who succeeded Sultan 'Alī and whose rule stretched from 1911 to 1960. In typical fashion, al-Bahlānī's introductory editorial commenced with reflections on God's ultimate power and wisdom. This was followed by a few comments on what he called the "philosophy of politics", listing the conditions for "the basics of authority": rules of management, firmness, determination and sound judgment.[18] Al-Bahlānī went on to say that a just rule was the path to advancing, to defending and securing one's existence, and to civilizing and enlightening the *umma*. This was all by way of introducing Khalīfa as the new Sultan of Zanzibar, portraying him as someone with the needed qualifications to accomplish that task.

In its section on 'foreign news', *al-Najāḥ* reported on the war in Tripoli, and more specifically on the performance of the Ottoman army during that war.[19] The piece aimed at portraying the 'brave' soldiers of the Ottoman army, the good health they enjoyed, and their abidance of the laws of war according to the Qur'an in preventing the local population from slaughtering Italian prisoners.[20] It is also clear from that piece of news that *al-Najāḥ* was updating its readers on that war as it reassured them that, contrary to previous news, the chief in command of the Ottoman

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be found in Muḥammad al-Busa'īdi library in Muscat. That specific copy, as the note on it indicated, was presented as a gift by Jum'a bin Sa'īd al-Mughayrī to a certain Sayyid Fayṣal in 1931.

[18] *Al-Najāḥ*, 1911: 1.

[19] The Libyan war was a rallying cause for Muslims and galvanized pan-Islamic sentiment in a strong manner. See Landau, *The Politics of pan-Islam,* 134-38.

[20] *Al-Najāḥ*, 1911: 4.

army in Tripoli had not been killed. That information was confirmed by the newspaper's special correspondent in Istanbul.[21]

One can only assume that *al-Najāḥ* regularly linked Zanzibaris to the rest of the Arab and Muslim world and kept them informed about its major events and news.[22] Moreover, given al-Bahlānī's reform tendencies and *al-Najāḥ*'s motto borrowed from the Qur'an: "I only seek *reform* as much as I can"[23] [emphasis mine], perhaps much of its content was devoted to discuss reforms in Islam, in line with other newspapers published in the Mashriq at the time and committed to that purpose.

In addition to his poems and his editorial in *al-Najāḥ*, he wrote his famous jurisprudence book *Nithār al-jawhar* (the Jewel in Prose), a commentary on al-Sālimī's work *Jawhar al-niẓām* (The Jewel of Poems). As both titles suggest, al-Sālimī's work was composed in verse while Bahlānī's was in prose. al-Bahlānī explained in his introduction the reason behind expanding al-Sālimī's work. While prose, he said, was the highest form of expression, it did not serve the purpose of detailing matters of jurisprudence. Thus, he chose to use a different format that was more accessible to the general public than prose. Al-Bahlānī died before completing the project. It is not clear when exactly he started to work on it but it was certainly after 1911, the year *Jawhar al-niẓām* was published. In any case, as it was only after his dismissal from his job as Chief Qāḍī in 1907 that al-Bahlānī devoted himself to

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[21] Ibid.

[22] B. G. Martin describes it as a Pan-Islamic newspaper, with a good number of subscribers. Idem, *Muslim Brotherhoods in 19th Century Africa*, 175. The same period witnessed the spread of periodicals among Arabs in Java as well with much of their content, like *al-Najāḥ's*, reflecting interest in the wider Islamic world as well as in pan-Islamism and Islamic reformism. See Mandal, "Forging a Modern Arab Identity in Java," 174-75.

[23] This, in addition to another Arab proverb "Whoever persists achieves success", was the logo of *al-Najāḥ* that appeared on top of its first page.

publishing and editing, it would have been within some time during the four year period.

Most of his poems were collected in 1951 by his nephew Sālim bin Sulaymān al-Bahlānī upon the request of Imām al-Sālimī's grandson Aḥmad. His *dīwān* was reprinted subsequently in 1957, 1980 and 1986. A number of his poems, however, had been printed previously in 1928 in Cairo by Yūsuf Tūmā al-Bustānī.[24] In addition to the *dīwān,* a collection of mystical poems appeared in *Kitāb al-nafas al-raḥmānī* (The Book of Divine Relief). Many of his poems are of the mystical genre, reflecting a deep spiritual orientation that revolved around repentance, complete surrender to God, and continuous request for His support and help. The nature of his poems, however, did not contradict the purpose of his poetry stated above. In fact, there lay the originality of al-Bahlānī who diligently used the art of mystical devotion as his medium to reach God, to whom he complained about the unsatisfactory state of Muslims and about his own weakness, helplessness and agony, and for whose intervention he frequently asked. Not all of his poems had a pure devotional character though. Others were more politically tuned and written for the sole purpose of supporting the *nahḍa* in Oman, encouraging all Omanis to sustain it, and warning them against the threat of colonialism to Islam and to Muslim unity. Thus, al-Bahlānī's thought, as revealed in his poetry, was a mélange of mystical spirituality and political activism; they intertwined and in most of his poems, the former usually introduced the latter. Supplication to God, seeking refuge and shelter in Him and asking for His mercy were

[24] The two editions used in this study are that of al-Bustānī , a rare edition found at Jaffet Library at the American University of Beirut and containing a number of poems not found in subsequent editions, and that of 'Alī al-Najdī Nāṣif published in 1980 in Oman by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture (known formerly as the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture).

usually prerequisites to asking for His assistance in saving Muslims and defeating their enemies.

All references to al-Bahlānī's works, however, omit one important writing not yet identified and still in manuscript form. This was his letter to Imām al-Kharūṣī, which elucidated al-Bahlānī's political and religious thought and revealed his vision to reform Omani internal as well as external affairs.[25] The letter straddles the four major themes that occupied al-Bahlānī's mind: the *nahḍa*, pan-Islamism, Islamic reformism, and colonialism.

Al-Bahlānī, the *nahḍa* and Reform

The world for al-Bahlānī was divided into three spheres: the Ibadi community, the larger Muslim community and the 'enemy'. The first two spheres were integral to each other, and in his imagination, they mirrored each other. The Ibadi *nahḍa* was a model for other Muslims to follow and the weakness of the Muslim *umma* was a constant reminder that change was a pressing need and rebellion was a religious duty, to rectify a deteriorating situation. Although he would occasionally remind his readers that Ibadis were the select among Muslims and that they held the purest beliefs, he nevertheless denounced sectarianism on several occasions and asked all Muslims to unite in order to face the challenges posed by the 'enemy'. His identity as a Muslim or as an Ibadi Muslim was diametrically opposed to the 'infidelity' of that enemy and the threat it posed to the dignity of Islam and its followers.

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[25] Nāṣir bin 'Udayyim al-Rawāḥī, "Kitāb warada min Zanjubār min Abi Muslim Nāṣir bin Sālim bin 'Udayyim al-Rawāhī ilā Imām al-muslimīn bi 'Umān Sālim bin Rāshid bin Sulaymān al-Kharūṣī a'azzahu Allah, 1915." ("A letter from Zanzibar by Nāṣir bin Sālim bin 'Udayyim al-Rawāhi to the Imam of Muslims in Oman Sālim bin Rāshid bin Sulaymān al-Kharūṣī, may God honor him"). TMs (photocopy), #738. Manuscripts Section, Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Muscat, Oman.

Oman was the battleground, the *nahḍa* was the anticipated revolution in order to defend Islam and rescue it from the claws of that 'enemy', and Ibadis were best fit to assume the leading role. Ibadism for al-Bahlānī, seen as uncompromising in nature and the heir of the legacy of the first 'revolution' in Muslim history, was considered the avant-garde of Islam. This 'revolutionary' spirit was best represented at the battle of *al-Nahrawān*, where those who opposed the arbitration between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya chose to fight and be defeated rather than offering concession.[26] They believed they were defending the rules of the Qur'an and God's message by refusing to accept the principle as well as the terms of the arbitration. Those were *al-khawārij*, from whom Ibadism ultimately evolved. However, like many other Ibadis of his time, al-Bahlānī distanced himself and his Ibadi sect from the legacy of *al-khawārij*, which they considered a legacy of heresies and betrayal to Islam's teachings.[27] He went even further, claiming that Ibadis alone represented the original true opposition while *al-khawārij* betrayed the spirit of that opposition.[28] In his famous poem *al-nahrawāniyya*, al-Bahlānī reconstructed the early history of Ibadism, recalling the major events around the succession debate between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, criticizing Banū Hāshim,

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[26] The significance and symbolism of al-Nahrawān is best captured by Hoffman. "Nahrawān," she has observed, "is for Ibādī Muslims what Karbala' is for the Shi'ā: the symbol of the willingness to sacrifice everything, even one's life, to answer the call of truth. Nahrawān lives on in the Ibādī imagination as a symbol of undying hope, despite overwhelming odds and certain defeat, the hope of actualizing a utopian vision of justice and piety in a state led by a righteous Imām duly selected by the leading scholars and pious men of the true Muslim community." Hoffman, "The Articulation of Ibādī Identity": 202.

[27] See Nāṣir bin Sālim bin 'Udayyim al-Rawāḥī al-'Umānī, *Diwān Abī-Muslim al-Bahlānī*, ed., Yūsuf Ṯāma al-Bustānī (Egypt: al-Matba'a al-'arabiyya, 1928), 51. Subsequent references to this work refer to al-Bustānī as author to differentiate between his edition and that of Nāṣif.

[28] Historically, the term 'Ibadis' appeared at a later phase and designated what was originally known as *jamā'at al-muslimīn* found in Basra. What al-Bahlānī actually meant in this context is that those who came to hold the title Ibadis were the core original opposition and those who became known as al-Khawārij rather betrayed the principles that group stood for. See Savage, *A Gateway to Hell*, 24-25, and see Mahdi Ṭālib Hāshim, *Al-Ḥaraka al-ibāḍiyya fi al-mashriq al-'arabī* (the Ibadi Movement in the Arab East) (London: Dār al-Ḥikma, 2001), 50-54.

the tribe of the prophet from whom Mu'āwiya descended, and politely yet strongly reprimanded Caliph 'Alī for not showing enough resolve vis-à-vis his rival and for compromising his God-given right for the seat of the Caliphate by agreeing to the principle of arbitration.[29] For him, only those who refused the arbitration, his sect followers were "the ones who truly follow the path of Muḥammad, the ones whose struggle can be identified as a *jihād* for the sake of Allah, and whose death is martyrdom."[30] They were the Party of God,[31] the defiant *shurāt*[32] whose mission had always been to guard Islam and its sacred establishment, the Imamate. Those were the true Ibadis, the rebellious Muslims ready to defend their religion and be a role model for others.

But it was not Ibadism alone as a sect that merited exaltation. The *nahḍa*, seen by its supporters as the manifestation of the true essence of Ibadism, captured al-Bahlānī's mind and set his pen in service of its defense and glorification. It was a dream come true, the long awaited event that, in his thought at least, was to change the course of history, revive the splendor of Islam and of Ibadism and most important, save the *umma* from an enduring humiliation. The *nahḍa* came to occupy a

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[29] The title of the poem is "al-rāiyya al-muḥkama fi shuhadā' al-nahrawān" (The Strong R Poem in praise of the martyrs of al-Nahrawān) in al-Bustānī, *Dīwān*, 46-58.

[30] Ibid., 57-58.

[31] The Arabic term is Ḥizb Allah. It is often used in relation to the Qur'anic verse: {alā inna ḥizb Allah hum al-ghālibūn}, literally meaning that the Party of God is triumphant. While each Muslim sect and each group has claimed to be *the* Party of God, al-Rawāhī considered the Ibadis in this context to be Ḥizb Allah. Al-Bustānī, *Dīwān*, 54

[32] *Shurāt* is a strictly Ibadi terminology. The word is derived from the Arabic verb *shara*, literally meaning to buy. In the Qur'anic context, which defines the term *shurāt*, it means those who buy the Hereafter by selling their souls for the sake of God. The meaning is derived from the following verse of the Qur'an: {Let those who sell life of this world for the Hereafter fight for the cause of God. Those who fight for the cause of God –whether they get slain or are rendered victorious—We shall give them a great reward.} 4: 74. Thus, *shurāt* in Ibadi history have represented the military elite best performing the practice of *jihad* in Islam, ready to defend Islam and the Imamate. They define one type of Imamate, that of *al-Shīra*, which is one of four types of Imamate and that defines the Imamate in a position of *ji'ad*. See Hāshim, *Al-Ḥaraka al-ibāḍiyya* , 269.

considerable space in his poetry and became the major event around which the last decade of his life –the most productive in terms of his writings-- revolved. He was not "the poet of Arabs" only, but also (if not primarily) the poet without rival of the Omani *nahḍa*.

In al-Bahlānī's mind, there is a historical as well as an ideological continuity between the early history of Islam and the formation of the Ibadi sect on the one hand, and the modern history of Islam and the need to defend it and revive its tenets on the other. Time and again, he invoked the past to legitimize the present and thus, the events of both *al-Nahrawān* and *al-nahḍa* served the same purpose of establishing God's just rule and defend religion. It mattered less to him whether the 'enemy' was from among the *jabābira* (unjust Muslim rulers – who, in the eyes of Ibadis, could be both someone like Mu'āwiya or a Sultan in Muscat) or from among Christians or 'infidels'. The *nahḍa*, after all, was aimed against both.

The meticulous details al-Bahlānī provided about the course of events surrounding the *nahḍa* suggest that he was kept informed in a timely manner. It is not clear how exactly the news reached him, but his poems indicate that he knew everything, from military operations to the creation of alliances, including the names of tribes who embraced the cause of the Imamate and those who did not. Most of his *nahḍa* poems were written in response to certain events that took place in Oman or to some breaking news he received. In fact, his poems can be used as a reliable chronicle of al-Sālimī's Imamate movement, outlining the military campaign, and identifying supporters and opponents.

But apparently, being a chronicler, an advocate, a supporter and a propagator for that movement was not enough. He repeatedly blamed himself for being unable to provide concrete help for the cause he cherished the most. This help, he continuously complained, should not have been less than his actual participation in the movement. The role he anticipated to play in the *nahḍa* and the Imamate was nothing short of a spiritual guide and a religious leader present among the Imamites. His aspiration for a leading role was made clear in his addendum to al-Khalīlī's poem *Sumūṭ al-thanā'*. He perceived himself as someone capable of establishing the rules of the Qur'an and advocating righteousness. Because of this, he asked God to make him "a Pole and an agent of renewal for the *umma* of the best Prophet, given my knowledge, passion and guidance,"[33] a role similar to that of al-Khalīlī's during the first *nahḍa*.[34]

The anxiety he mentioned was not related to his concern about the state of Islam alone but also to his own personal problems that occurred as a result of his advocacy for the Imamate. Although, by the end, he was not able to offer the *nahḍa* more than verbal support and propaganda, he nevertheless irritated the British who restricted his movement and did not allow him to leave Zanzibar. He was seen as an instigator and his desire to leave for Oman and join the ranks --a longing that never materialized-- was obviously taken very seriously by British authorities and perhaps by some other members of the Omani elite who did not share his sympathy toward al-Sālimī and his movement. He complained in many instances about both pressure and opposition to his views from among his own kin and the 'enemies'.[35]

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[33] Nāṣif. *Dīwān*, 175.
[34] Ibid.
[35] This complaint was best stated in his *mīmiyya* poem, where his bitterness towards restrictions imposed on him is clearly expressed. See al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 271.

British antagonism toward him reached a critical level in 1913, when he lost all financial support and fell out of the court's favor. He became a *persona non grata* after he sent an article to *al-Ahrām* in Egypt via the Ibadi scholar and activist Qāṣim al-Shammākhī. Al-Shammākhī (d. 1916) was born in Nfusa mountains in modern day Libya. He left for Egypt where he was appointed for a while as a General Consul for Tunisia until 1881. He became a friend of the Egyptian writer Muṣṭafa bin Ismā'īl who, under al-Shammākhī's influence, became an Ibadi.[36] Al-Shammākhī was closely associated with the Salafiyya movement and admired Muḥammad 'Abduh and his line of thought. He wrote a treatise attacking Sufi practices and defending the Salafi ideology and its leader 'Abduh.[37] In that letter to *al-Ahrām*, al-Bahlānī intended to make the cause of the Omani *nahḍa* known to other Arabs, or in other words, attempted to internationalize the cause of the *nahḍa* and turn it from an Omani affair into one of concern to Arabs and Muslims.

The letter appeared under the title "Revolution in Muscat"[38] and was introduced by an editorial column. The news about the *nahḍa*, according to *al-Ahrām*, had reached them from Basra in Iraq. They were informed that al-Sālimī, whom the newspaper identified as the greatest Ibadi scholar, along with other leaders had appointed Sālim al-Kharūṣī as their Imām and were recruiting many followers. The news mentioned the fall of Nizwa in the hands of the Imamites after Sultan Fayṣal's army showed disobedience. Another dispatch to *al-Ahrām* came from Basra

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[36] *Mu'jam a'lām al-*Ibāḍiyya, vol. 2, 345

[37] Qāṣim al-Shammākhi al-'Āmirī. *Risālat al-qawl al-matīn fi al-rad 'alā al-mukhālifīn.* (The Treatise of the Strong Saying in Rebuking Transgressors) (Egypt: Matba'at al-Manār al-Islamiyya, 1906). It is also to be remembered that al-Shammākhī was the editor of the pan-Islamic Cairene newspaper *nibrās al-mashāriqa wa al-maghāriba* and who, at one point, approached Sultan Fayṣal of Muscat on the need for a pan-Islamist policy. See discussion in chapter ii.

[38] *Al-Ahrām*, July 30, 1913, vol. 10766.

afterwards reassuring the newspaper that the movement was still gaining momentum and enlisting more supporters. The editorial was followed by al-Shammākhī's introduction to the letter he received "from one of the honorable Arab ulama in Zanzibar."[39] Although al-Shammākhī did not provide the name of his correspondent, al-Bahlānī revealed his identity as the author of that article in a letter to al-Kharūṣī, to whom he complained about the devastating consequences he had to endure as a result of publishing that article.[40]

The letter, addressed to al-Shammākhī, his partner Muṣṭafa bin Ismā'īl al-'Umarī and all other Ibadis in Egypt, began with praise to God whose "evidence [of Truth] was revealed and the light of whose verse {And the party of God is the winner} came true".[41] Al-Bahlānī first confirmed the aptitude and legitimacy of the Imamites and celebrated their victory over "those practicing injustice, tyranny and oppression among His people."[42] He emphasized the unity of Omanis, under the leadership of al-Sālimī, and their consent to the necessity to overthrow the Sultan in Muscat and on the appointment of a 'savior' Imām. He then outlined the military campaign and the events that led to the appointment of Imām al-Kharūṣī who was "known for his knowledge, faith, zeal… and his efforts to spread the message of the movement."[43] Al-Bahlānī promised to keep al-Shammākhī and his fellows informed about future developments and concluded his letter with a request for al-Shammākhī to send a copy of it to Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash in Algeria as he had not had the chance to write to him

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[39] Ibid.
[40] See discussion below.
[41] *Al-Ahrām*, July 30, 1913, vol. 10766.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

yet.[44] *Al-Ahrām* closed the article adding a brief introductory paragraph on Oman and the events that led to its separation from Zanzibar.

Details provided in that article must have been new to many readers of *al-Ahrām* and must have drawn their attention to the developments on the Omani front. However, what is of relevance here is not the details al-Bahlānī provided but rather his attempt to go public with his support for the Imamate, to openly defend its case and explain its mission to other Arabs. Moreover, the letter exposes the dynamics of the Ibadi network of contact and information-exchange, and the role the Ibadi diaspora had played in connecting Ibadis together on the one hand and with other Muslims in the Mashriq, on the other.

Two years following the publication of that article al-Bahlānī sent a long letter to al-Kharūṣī.[45] Not only did its content attest to the ongoing intellectual ties between scholars in Oman and Zanzibar and to al-Bahlānī's role in channeling those currents into Oman, but it also bore witness to al-Bahlānī's religio-political thought, which was a blend of the different intellectual currents of his time. After confirming the legitimacy of al-Kharūṣi as the Imām, as *amīr al-mu'minīn* (Commander of Believers), as the *khalīfa* (Caliph) and the leader of a sincere *nahḍa*, al-Bahlānī assured him he was chosen by God for that mission because he was the strongest, the purest, the most pious, sensible, just, patient, determined and ascetic of all. Those were the necessary qualities of an Imām, and since al-Kharūṣī had them all, he was worthy of his title and God-ordained role.[46] This introduction, however, served not only the purpose of confirming his legitimacy but of reminding al-Kharūṣī of the ensuing responsibilities

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[44] Ibid.
[45] This is in reference to al-Bahlānī. "Kitāb warada min Zanjubār".
[46] Ibid., 1 (pages numbered by author).

and duties toward Muslims and toward the just application of the Sharī'a. If he needed an example to follow, al-Bahlānī referred him to the ultimate sources of guidance in Muslim history: the Prophet and the Righteous Caliphs.[47] Their conduct, especially against oppressors and polytheists, was an authoritative evidence to cultivate in order to rule in the best manner.[48]

In line with his thought that inner divisions among Muslims hindered progress and triumph, he was concerned about the inner strife in Oman and its impact on the survival of the Imamate itself. But he was obviously even more concerned about the way al-Kharūṣī was handling Omani internal affairs. Al-Bahlānī, however, was not worried much about the roots of this strife among Omanis but more about the fact that it distracted Omanis from paying attention to the enemy surrounding them. He warned them that hypocrisy and ignorance were blinding them to the danger posed by their enemy and were preventing them from following the Sharī'a and the Sunna (the exemplary practice of the Prophet).[49] Al-Bahlānī's advice for al-Kharūṣī was to allow room for 'politics' in running his internal affairs. By 'politics' he meant pragmatism and a comprehensive approach to governance. To explain his views, he advised the Imām to be forgiving, merciful and just if he were to firmly establish his rule. In addition, he asked him to surround himself with righteous ministers and advisors.[50]

In order to succeed, al-Bahlānī outlined five major steps to be taken: honor the noble, have mercy on the weak, help the needy, face the enemy, and make Oman a

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[47] Ibid., 3.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid. 4.
[50] Al-Kharūṣī's appointment as an Imam was not based on his 'qualifications' alone but also on his tribal affiliation, with al-Kharūṣīs being part of the Ghāfirīs. Al-Kharūṣī did make at the beginning of his career certain appointments for 'tribal' considerations. Al-Bahlānī's concern and repeated advice must have been a response to al-Kharūṣī's policy. See Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, 256-57.

safe place.[51] He reminded the Imām that only justice could make his rule prosperous and save it from collapsing. Injustice, he warned him, would ultimately create dissent.[52] Again, it is in the past that he should find guidance, in the deeds of the *salaf,* especially those of Caliph 'Umar,[53] who has always been depicted as an exemplary Muslim ruler who combined both compassion and strength. He provided al-Kharūṣī with details on how to win the hearts of Omani subjects and discourage them from forming coalitions against the Imām.[54] This constant reminder and repeated emphasis on the need to be considerate toward his subjects indicated that al-Bahlānī was not very pleased with al-Kharūṣī's policies and perhaps perceived them as being strict and harsh, alienating many Omanis and damaging the cause of the Imamate.

He reminded him that people were divided into three groups: one supportive and appreciative, to whom al-Kharūṣī should listen carefully, and whom he should trust. The second group was undecided and carried both the good and the evil. His policy with the latter should be one of incitement and intimidation. As for the third, it was malleable and not trustworthy, hypocritical and unreliable. It should be dealt with firmly and strictly before it could cause dissent or provoke troubles.[55]

He reiterated his warning that religious rule was based on two important and critical elements: Sharī'a and politics. Dealing with the Sharī'a, he cautioned him, was not an easy task. If he were not to follow the example of the Prophet and the Caliphs, he would not be able to comprehend it. Al-Bahlānī recommended that the Imām

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[51] Al-Bahlānī, "Kitāb warada min Zanjubār", 5.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid. 5-6.
[54] Ibid., 6. This threat to the Imamate government was real. Al-Kharūṣi was facing serious problems at the Interior, especially from Nāṣir al-Ghāfirī, the ruler of Bahla and Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm at Rustaq. See Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, 249-50.
[55] Al-Bahlānī. "Kitāb warada min Zanjubār", 7.

consulted with his ulama as he had previously advised in his *Al-Siyāsa bi al-īmān* (Politics through Faith), a treatise apparently written to the Imamites before 1913 but not published for lack of finances.[56] This consultation policy, he added later, was the backbone of sound 'politics'; if he lacked it, he would lose power. The wisdom and assistance of experienced and wise men around him who could offer advice and sound judgment would make his task successful.[57]

Al-Bahlānī took this opportunity to advise al-Kharūṣī on the need to have a printing press in Oman that would publish Ibadi books and other religious tracts.[58] This could be arranged, he continued, by contacting Shaykh al-Shammākhī in Egypt. However, a printing press was not the only necessity missing in Oman. A most urgent matter was to open schools and to urge Omanis to donate money "for the sake of this great project because your country Oman is horribly weakened due to ignorance. Ignorance is the greatest calamity for religion and life."[59] He wished Omani ulama would endorse his opinion and make education for children obligatory in order to benefit the *umma*.

Al-Bahlānī recommended to the Imām ways to finance the proposed educational system suggesting that poor children would be supported by the public treasury while rich ones by their parents. To reassure the Imām, al-Bahlānī referred him again to the Qur'an and the Sunna as carrying enough evidence about the need for education if he were to sustain his rule. Leaving the matter in the hands of parents to decide on the education of their children, he warned him, was harmful to the *umma*

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[56] Ibid., 8.
[57] Ibid., 12.
[58] Ibid., 9.
[59] Ibid., 10.

and would hinder its advancement.[60] "Had advanced nations --that were stagnant in darkness and ignorance—not been forced by their own governments [to make changes] they would have never developed and modernized,"[61] he cautioned the Imām. This education that al-Bahlānī promoted, however, was primarily religious, rooted in Islamic sciences which "take the *umma* from darkness to light, and from vileness to virtue and perfection."[62] This 'scientific renaissance',[63] as he called it, should be enforced and considered an urgent matter to be discussed by the finest among Muslims, ulama and local leaders. It should be a vital cause to which all efforts are directed. The subject matter should be meditated at all gatherings and meetings, and promoted by designated orators who would encourage people to participate in that renaissance and warn them of the terrible consequences if the present condition of education in Oman persisted.[64] They should point to the fact that the Omani nation could only be 'enlightened' by religious knowledge and Islamic sciences, and that ignorance was the primary reason behind barbarism, malevolence, division, enmity and all evils that befell nations.[65]

Because al-Bahlānī believed the Imamate was a *jihād* for the sake of Allah and aimed against His enemies, he wished he was in Oman helping the cause and gaining heavenly rewards for doing that. The reason he could not go there, as he complained to al-Kharūṣī, was his heavy debt. That debt had accumulated after he had become ostracized and lost all support from the Zanzibari government as a result of his open

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[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] The term scientific, translated from *'ilmiyya*, refers to the Muslim traditional definition of *'ilm*, which essentially refers to religious sciences, that could include sciences outside the scope of religion in the strict meaning.
[64] Al-Bahlānī, "kitāb warada min Zanjubār", 11.
[65] Ibid.

sympathy to the cause of the Imamate.[66] What aggravated the situation and alienated him further was the article in *al-Ahrām* published two years earlier.[67] As a consequence, he lost all vital support and was ultimately thrown into debt, about which he complained on several occasions. It is not clear from that letter who took the decision to cut off his assistance, whether it was Sultan Khalīfa bin Ḥārib himself or British officials. Speculation here is futile as by that time, all matters of Zanzibari affairs had been completely transferred into British hands.

Al-Bahlānī was not only suffering from financial loss but also from moral loss after the death of al-Sālimī. He grieved to the Imām about the deep effect of that loss, best expressed in the two eulogies he composed upon hearing the news of al-Sālimī's death.[68] Al-Bahlānī then asked the Imām to consider him his servant and his propagandist in Zanzibar until he could go to Oman, where he could serve the Imām best.[69]

Al-Kharūṣī, continued al-Bahlānī, should not only confine himself to Omani internal affairs but should also design an external policy for his country. Al-Bahlānī's reform plan for Oman included a proposal aimed at integrating the country more strongly into the region and providing it with a vital role in shaping regional events. For this purpose, he asked al-Kharūṣī to befriend the ruler of Najd and those of the coast of the Persian Gulf:

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[66] Al-Bahlānī left a dotted empty space after using the term 'ostraçized', assuming that al-Kharūṣī would know the person the author was talking about. Al-Bahlānī, "kitāb warada min Zanjubār", 13

[67] Ibid.

[68] He described his death as a calamity that fell upon Islam and Muslims and not only upon al-*nahḍa* and Omanis. Al-Bahlānī was deeply moved by the passing away of al-Sālimī and his sorrow and pain increased as a result. He had hoped to go to Oman and meet with al-Sālimī but now his hope vanished. The two eulogies are included in al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 102-113.

[69] Al-Bahlānī, *kitāb warada min zanjubār*, 14.

> Send a delegation to strengthen the ties of concord and friendship between you and them. This would be a wise policy and a rewarding one. Select a delegation of two or more from among vigilant and wise Muslim ulama as your deputies. Write to the Sharīf of Mecca, to the Imām of San'aa and to the Sultan of pilgrimage. Craft a certain policy with each ruler in the Arabian Peninsula and if you could make the Arabian Peninsula one friendly block, do it. [70]

The ultimate purpose, al-Bahlānī stated, was to try and unite the Arabian Peninsula, obviously with a leading role for Oman. The Peninsula at the time was divided into several kingdoms, controlled by rival tribes, and on the eve of World War I, became a competing scene for Ottoman and British influence. The Emir of Najd, whose support the Imām was supposed to seek, was Ibn Sa'ūd whose loyalty was swinging between the Ottomans and the British. However, when World War I began, he took the side of the British and concluded a treaty with them.[71] Imām Yaḥya of San'aa was the most loyal to the Ottomans of all the rulers on whom al-Bahlānī reckoned. Despite previous hostilities, when the war started, he stood quietly by the Ottomans.[72] Sharīf Ḥusayn of Mecca, sought out by Britain to counter the authority and prestige of the Ottoman Sultan, was engaged in secret correspondence with the British known as the Ḥusayn-McMahon correspondence. He was promised a future Arab state should he join the Entente Powers and revolt against the Ottomans --which he did in June 1916. It is clear where al-Bahlānī stood. The Arabian coalition he envisioned and proposed to the

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[70] Ibid., 15.

[71] Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi Books, 1998), 235-238. At the time al-Bahlānī wrote his letter to al-Kharūṣī, Ibn Sa'ūd had not yet taken sides with either the Ottomans or the British. On one hand, he promised not to interrupt Ottoman arms and equipment caravans passing via his territories to Yemen and Asir, where an Ottoman army was stationed during the War. He also turned a blind eye to supplies coming from the Gulf coast to Hijaz and Syria. On the other hand, he had made it clear that he was not able to oppose the British, who pressured him to open hostilities against the Ottoman vassal, the emir of Hail, and which he did in January 1915. He was to sign later in the year a British-Najdi treaty, which, in effect, guaranteed a British protectorate over Najd and dependencies. Ibid., 236-38.

[72] See Paul Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 7-9.

Imām was likely a pro-Ottoman one though he was unaware of some of the behind-the-scene developments.

Involvement in the affairs of the Arabian Peninsula was only one step on the road to linking up Muslims everywhere. The next step was to reach out to the Ottoman dynasty through Sulaymān al-Bārūnī, the deputy to the Chamber of Notables in Istanbul.[73] Al-Bārūnī had been appointed to that Chamber after undertaking a high profile political and military role in the resistance of Tripolitania to the Italian invasion. "By contacting him and making his acquaintance", al-Bahlānī continued, "you get to know the Ottoman State. This is a wise and beneficial policy."[74] He reiterated the need for Oman to establish friendly relationships with its neighbors and alerted al-Kharūṣī to the possibility of acquiring firearms and weapons through his relationship with the ruler of Najd. Al-Bahlānī stated that that was a recommendation he received from other members and he believed necessary. He emphasized his main point in that letter about the need for the Imam to pay attention to 'politics' and not to be confined to matters of religious rituals only. 'Politics' included making friends and the more he could make, the better. He volunteered to be a link between the Imām and the various Muslim associations in India, "whose policy is to guard Islam."[75] If he were to follow al-Bahlānī's advice, he would then

> show our infidel enemies that the followers of Islam have come together and are united under the umbrella of *al-jāmi'a al-islāmiyya* (Islamic Union) [emphasis mine].... Delivering your message to other Muslim nations reveals your good intention, your care to restore religious practices, revive the Sunna

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[73] Al-Bārūnī resided in Istanbul, along with his family, from 1914 until 1919. He had been there before, where he was elected a member in Council of Deputies from 1908 until 1911. See Ibrāhīm, *Sulaymān al-Bārūnī Bāshā*, Vol. 1, 86-90.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid. Muslim Indians were very much integral to and involved in the pan-Islamic movement at the time. See Azmi Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain (1877-1924)* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

> and suppress innovation. [It also reveals] that your *nahḍa* was not for the sake of gaining power and might but for the sake of Allah whose sanctity has been violated and whose laws have been suspended and that you are a stumbling block in the way of infidels.[76]

Al-Bahlāni urged him to commission someone to write a letter to be distributed among Muslims in order to explain the purpose and mission of the *nahḍa*. He proposed that the letter be published in Zanzibar or be sent to al-Shammākhī in Egypt or to al-Bārūnī in Istanbul.[77] He concluded his letter by conveying the regards of all those in Zanzibar who were praying for the victory of the Imamate, and asking the Imām to widely distribute his *nūniyya* poem attached to the letter, a poem in support of the Imamate.[78]

Al-Bahlānī was eager to change the social and political landscape of Oman under the Imamate and to raise its profile in the Arab-Muslim world. An assessment of the impact of al-Bahlānī's views on al-Kharūṣī or Omani political affairs is beyond the scope of this work. However, the Imām died the same year al-Bahlānī did (1920)[79] and was succeeded by Muḥammad al-Khalīlī who was to invite Sulaymān al-Bārūnī to come to Oman, work as his advisor and implement reforms similar to those suggested by al-Bahlānī. Al-Bārūnī was also to function as the Imām's ambassador to the Hijaz and Najd, in an attempt to mediate between the two rival families the Hashemites and the Saudis, and was supposed to represent him at the Caliphate Congress held in Egypt in 1925.[80]

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[76] Ibid., 16.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Al-Kharūṣī died in July 21, 1920. Interestingly, al-Bahlānī had sent al-Kharūṣī a poem one month before the latter was killed and in which he predicted the Imām's death. The poem was more of an obituary to the Imām. See al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 234.
[80] See Ibrāhīm, *Sulaymān al-Bārūnī*, vol. 1, 249-253. There is no available evidence to suggest that al-Khalīlī was either familiar with al-Bahlānī's recommendations or was acting in light of them. However, one can notice that al-Bārūnī's activities in Oman corresponded with al-Bahlānī's recommendations.

Many conclusions can be drawn from this letter. First, there is no doubt that al-Bahlānī, given the language he used and the audacity with which he addressed al-Kharūṣī, spoke with the language of an 'authority' and that he had receptive ears in Oman. His 'authority' was based not only on his reputation as a renowned scholar, an esteemed poet and a supporter of the *nahḍa* but also on his unique set of mind in comparison to scholars in Oman. Zanzibar, with its strong links to the Arab and Muslim world, secured him connections, provided him with a global vision, broadened his knowledge, and fashioned his intellect. It provided him with a cosmopolitan environment, where ideas and debates raised in the rest of the Arab world were speedily channeled to Zanzibar. Ideas about colonialism, Islam and reform resonated well within the Muslim community there as the Zanzibari society experienced them first hand. A well-informed and well-connected scholar, al-Bahlānī's advice to insulated Omani scholars must have been valued by some and deemed instructive.

Second, the letter is indisputable testimony to the stream of intellectual exchange between Omanis on the two sides of the former dynasty. The Omani elite in Zanzibar, and through the different layers of ties to Oman, kept itself at close range to Omani affairs. Those in support of the *nahḍa* considered it their sacred duty to offer the Imamites all sorts of help and sought for themselves a vital role in fostering and sustaining the *nahḍa*. From that perspective, Zanzibar not only remained linked to Oman but was also the link between Oman and the rest of the Arab world. This brings into discussion the ways through which the Ibadi network of contact functioned and the vital role the Ibadi diaspora, especially in Cairo, played in linking Ibadis together. Their sectarian ties, as well as shared belief in the cause of the Imamate, bonded them.

They considered it was their God-given right and sacred duty to propagate and defend its case. But the importance of that network not only linked Ibadis together but also linked Ibadis with Islamic reform and anti-colonial movements in the Mashriq. This was where such high-profile Ibadis as al-Shammākhī and al-Bārūnī operated.

As for the content of the letter itself, it indicates the degree to which al-Bahlānī was aware of the religious and political debates in the Arab world in which ulama like himself were engaged. It may be difficult to trace each idea to a specific source or specific person but there is no doubt that, in general, al-Bahlānī was influenced by the Salafiyya reform movement, whose ideas had had an obvious imprint on him. His emphasis on the interrelationship between religion and politics and the need to understand Islamic governance as based on both text and reasoning, conformed to the general reformist approach to Islam prevalent at the time, as well as to the political thought developing within that framework. Al-Bahlānī's concept of a harmony between 'religion' and 'politics' paralleled that of 'revelation' and 'reason' developed by Muḥammad 'Abduh.[81] Al-Bahlānī's task, surely, was not to remind al-Kharūṣī of the need to apply the laws of the Sharī'a since that was one of the main purposes and ideals of the *nahḍa* movement in the first place. His message was rather to remind the Imām that the Sharī'a did not operate in the abstract but in rapport to daily life, and that reasoning was absolutely necessary for success.[82] The Sharī'a should work within the context of sound 'politics' and decisions should be taken based on that process of

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[81] See Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Political and Legal Theories*, 109-111.

[82] It should be noted here that al-Bahlānī did not specifically use the term *ijtihād* in referring to the notion of reasoning in daily maters. Nowhere did he resort to that term or discuss it despite its importance and relevance in the campaign for reform. The term *'siyāsa'*, however, which he employed abundantly in his letter, carried similar value and connotation but more so from a practical perspective than a legal one.

daily interpretation. In addition, al-Bahlānī seemed to have been fully aware of the debates taking place at the time around the role of the Muslim ruler, whether he was called Imām, Caliph or Sultan. On the one hand, he was directly responsible for the welfare of Muslims but on the other hand, his power should be checked by ulama and others who should engage in the process of decision-making.[83]

Moreover, al-Bahlānī's advice to orchestrate a national campaign in order to introduce elementary education in Oman, the link he made between education and renaissance, and the comparison between advanced nations and those which were not were also features of contemporary reform thought that emphasized the need for education as part of the rejuvenation of Muslim societies. The difference, however, between al-Bahlānī and Muslim reformers such as Muḥammad 'Abduh was the nature of education sought. For someone like 'Abduh, the necessary education was the one successfully combining modern and traditional modes of education. For al-Bahlānī, however, the modern type of education represented by both natural and social sciences did not belong in a paradigm that was purely religious.

More important, the letter had a clear pan-Islamist tone. His choice of specific words such as *al-jāmi'a al-islāmiyya* was not arbitrary. The term *al-jāmi'a al-islāmiyya* itself was a prerogative for Muslim reformers, particularly Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh, who championed the pan-Islamist ideology and deemed it a pillar of any reform plan. Unity of Muslims, regardless of their doctrinal or sectarian differences, was al-Afghānī's major concern and was considered by

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[83] The opinion of Muḥammad 'Abduh in particular about the role and function of a Muslim ruler is in conformity with the Ibadi theory of governance. See Muḥammad 'Amāra, *Muḥammad 'Abduh: al-a'māl al-kāmila*, p. 104-106.

'Abduh a vital step in order to achieve religious reform.[84] Both *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa* and *al-Manār* had discussed Muslim unity and both had made their way into Zanzibar.[85] As previously indicated, *al-Najāḥ*, edited by al-Rawāḥī, advocated and propagated pan-Islamism. Al-Bahlānī's continuous reference to Ibadi champions of pan-Islamism such as al-Shammākhī and al-Bārūnī is further evidence of his awareness of both pan-Islamism and the role Ibadis were playing in it.

Al-Bahlānī and Egypt: A Case of Pan-Islamism

The scheme presented to unite the Arabian Peninsula and to reach out to other Muslims is only a piece of evidence about al-Bahlānī's self-perceived role as a pan-Islamist reformer who believed in the effectiveness of Muslim unity to keep colonial threats at bay. His concern about Muslims was by no means restricted to Ibadis or Muslims in the Peninsula, but included Muslims elsewhere as well. While he kept one eye on Omani affairs, he had the other on Muslim and Arab affairs, particularly in Egypt. This was revealed in a letter-poem he sent to Cairo to the organizers of the General Egyptian Congress, celebrating their efforts to bring together Egyptian Copts and Muslims.[86] The Congress was held after a series of events had led to increasing

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[84] Ibid., 115.

[85] See, in particular, "*al-wiḥda al-islāmiyya*" in Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. *Al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa*. 3rd. ed., (Beirut: Dār al-kitāb al-'arabi, 1983) 107-113.

[86] It is said that the poem circulated in some Egyptian newspapers at the time, especially in *al-Muayyad*. See Ahmad bin Hamad al-Khalīlī, "Al-Bahlānī faqīhan wa adīban," (Al-Bahlānī: A jurist and a writer) in Qirā'āt fi fikr al-Bahlānī al-Rawāḥī, ed., Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ṣulaybī (Oman: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa al-Thaqāfa, 1998), 16.

tension between the two religious communities,[87] in which the press was accused as being a primary instigator.[88]

Turn of the century Egypt witnessed the rise of two main nationalist ideologies: Egyptian nationalism, mainly propagated by Aḥmad Luṭfī al-Sayyid and his *Umma* Party and Islamic nationalism led by community leaders such as 'Alī Yūsuf, 'Abd al-'Azīz Jāwīsh and Muṣṭafa Kāmil.[89] Islamic nationalism alarmed the Coptic community which feared further undermining of their status as a non-Muslim minority in Egyptian society. In response to this general feeling of alarm and in particular to a number of anti-Copt inflammatory editorials run by the Islamic-oriented *al-Liwā'* of the National Party, the Copts held a General Congress in March 1910. The recommendations asked for some guarantees and reforms pertaining to the Coptic community. Muslims responded by organizing the General Egyptian Congress with delegates from both sides.[90] It took place between April 29 and May 4, 1911 and was headed by ex-prime minister Muṣṭafa Riyāḍ Pasha (1834-1911).[91]

Apparently al-Bahlānī was following the unfolding of those events very closely, probably through the Egyptian newspapers circulating in Zanzibar. The significance of the situation did not escape his attention and he felt compelled to

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[87] The role of the leading Copt Butrus Pasha Ghali in the Dinshawai Trial, in the Sudan Condominium Agreement and reactivation of the Press Law in 1909 had victimized the whole Coptic community in the eyes of many Muslims. See Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: from Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*. 4th ed. (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 208-209.

[88] Vatikiotis accuses the anti-British pan-Islamic *al-Muayyad* --the newspaper which, it is reported, published the poem al-Bahlānī sent to the Congress-- and *al-Liwā'* in particular for being responsible for inciting Muslims against Copts in Egypt. See, Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 207.

[89] See Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs: the Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). The pan-Islamist and pan-Ottomanist Muṣṭafa Kāmil believed in Egyptian nationalism as well but not in the strict terms set by al-Sayyid. For someone like Kāmil, Egyptian nationalism was only part of Egyptian Muslim identity, and which tied it to the Ottoman world first and foremost.

[90] P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 209.

[91] See al-Ziriklī, vol. 7, 233.

participate, in one way or another. For that purpose al-Bahlānī sent Riyāḍ Pasha a poem in which he praised the latter's efforts at uniting the Egyptian front and bringing the two communities together. He addressed the 'residents of the Nile' and expressed his utmost concern about "the event that is keeping religion on guard."[92] He criticized the 'plot' crafted by Copts in their previous Congress as being both threatening to Egypt and infuriating to others. He then turned to criticizing the Copts, accusing them of being ungrateful to the special status granted to them by Islam and ungrateful to Muslims who, as he claimed, had forgiven them for their role in supporting Napoleon's invasion of Egypt.[93] He reminded them to be appreciative of Muslims who pardoned them and treated them as neighbors.[94]

This harsh criticism was then followed by a plea for Copts to unite with Muslims for the common cause. That common cause was to fend off the threat of British colonialism and protect the country that had united them for centuries. "The Nile", he said, "had provided for us all but now we are provided by a serpent that resembles Hell. It gave us milk, then blood, and we are satisfied."[95] That serpent was the occupation which was greedy and deceptive and hence, Egyptians should not be misled by its 'promises of independence'.[96] The 'army of occupation', as he labeled it, was there to stay. And its own presence, he emphasized, should unite Christians and Muslims or else they would encounter disaster.[97]

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[92] Al-Ṣulaybī, *Qirā'āt*, 16.
[93] Ibid., 17.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

The last part of his poem was dedicated to Riyāḍ Pasha and the organizers of the Conference who were a good example for others to follow.[98] Their '*nahḍa*' was blessed by God and was a precursor for change and hope. They were the elite of the *umma*, led by the "hero of Islam" Riyāḍ Pasha who was on guard defending his country and his religion.[99] As was the case with the poems he sent a few years later to the leaders of *al-nahḍa* in Oman, he regretted the fact that 'words' and not 'swords' had become his only means available to assist in any victory. In all cases, he regarded his participation in the conference through written words as part of his duty as a concerned Muslim obliged to support his brothers in Islam.[100]

Al-Bahlānī's interest in Egyptian affairs was also driven by his awareness of the significance of events taking place in Egypt. First, his analysis of those events was framed by his own perception of the destructive and dividing role of colonialism in the Muslim world. Communal skirmishes in Egypt only confirmed his worries. Moreover, his exaggerated condemnation of the Copts in terms of their alleged collaboration with the French occupation and their 'opportunist' attitude in dealing with the British reflected nothing more than his own conception of what colonialism entailed. It was there to destroy the unity of colonized societies and turn minorities against the Muslim majority. Its primary target, as he hinted on several occasions, was to humiliate Islam and Muslims and take over their resources. It was his responsibility to warn Muslims against colonialism; it was his mission to guard the *umma*.

In his commentary on the intellectual career of al-Bahlānī, Aḥmad bin Ḥamad al-Khalīlī, the present Mufti of Oman, has commented the following: "He is a man in a

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[98] Ibid., 18.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid., 19.

nation and a nation in a man."[101] It is not clear to what nation al-Khalīlī was referring. Was it the Omani, the Ibadi, or the Muslim nation? Whatever definition the mufti intended, al-Bahlānī represented them all. It is true that the Ibadi *umma* was at the center of his concerns and he devoted much of his energy to celebrating the Ibadi cause. His Ibadi *umma*, however, intersected with the larger Muslim *umma*; each represented the agony as well as the aspirations of the other. Ibadi beliefs, he thought, could be a driving force behind not only an Omani *nahḍa* but also a general Muslim one aiming at rescuing Muslims and eliminating colonialism. Each was suffering from the same burdens that shackling its advancement. The larger Muslim world to which he felt he belonged and to which he wanted his community and his sect to reach out was his ultimate 'nation'.

Al-Bahlānī and Colonialism

Colonialism was *the* enemy that occupied the mind of al-Bahlānī and was the theme that bonded his poems together. It justified and urged the *nahḍa* and inspired his pan-Islamist scheme. And yet he rarely let his readers know who that enemy was in an explicit way. It was a 'given' he did not need to identify but it was also a real threat to his financial well-being once he became more explicit. This enemy, as described in his poems, embodied all menace and fear: it was the assault on Islam, the threat to its social values and the source of misery among Muslims. If there was a widow, an orphan or a deprived person to be found among Muslims, it was colonialism, according to al-Bahlānī, that should be blamed. It was not his enemy alone, or that of Oman or Zanzibar or Egypt. It was the common enemy of all Muslims, the peril against which they should unite. It was the modern 'heresy' threatening the very being

[101] Al-Ṣulaybī, *Qirā'āt*, 12.

of Islam, much like the 'heresy' of the first century that broke the *umma* down into sects and destroyed its unity.

Al-Bahlānī's views on colonialism remained static for the full course of his life. Though he realized that Europe, the 'enemy', was far more advanced than Muslim societies, he nevertheless remained critical of its colonial schemes regarding Arabs and Muslims. He had previously commented in his record of Ḥmūd's trip to mainland East Africa on Britain's role in making improvements there. This was followed by another positive yet unusual commentary that Britain's aim was justice and civilizing (*tamdīn*).[102] Britain was also, he continued, a source of safety and peace. A similar impression was given upon visiting Lamu. Noticing the neglect that had befallen the city, al-Bahlānī assured his readers that Britain would definitely introduce changes and 'civilization'.[103] However, the term 'civilization' that al-Bahlānī used here designated urban developments and improvements in infra-structures, and not ethics or moral values. Despite the fact that he referred to the 'justice' of Britain, al-Bahlānī did not genuinely believe in the morality of the European civilization. His positive commentary on Britain's role in introducing justice should not carry much weight if compared to his beliefs, stated everywhere in his poetry, in the tyranny of his 'enemy'. In fact, and despite his confession that Europe was more advanced than Muslim societies, his statements in the *riḥla* should be taken with caution. His note at the end of the record –stating that all that he had written about what he had seen was officially received from the High Commissioner-- suggests that he was perhaps

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[102] Al-Rawāḥī, *Al-lawāmi' al-barqiyya*, 9. I use 'civilizing' to translate the word *tamdīn* and 'civilization' for *madaniyya*.
[103] Ibid., 25.

compelled to include those remarks about the British.[104] Despite his reformist approach to Islam, he did not share with many reformists of his century an elaborate admiration of Europe and did not discuss ways to seek harmony between Europe and Islam. The face of Europe, as portrayed in his many poems, was that of oppression, injustice, suffering, arrogance and complete dishonor to Islam and Muslims.

This was especially evident for him from the standpoint of his career as a Qaḍī in Zanzibar. It is here that al-Bahlānī witnessed what he considered complete dishonor to his religion. Following the establishment of the British Protectorate in 1890, the judicial system in Zanzibar underwent fundamental changes. The most dramatic change for a Qāḍī was the exclusion of his jurisdiction over criminal cases since 1909, now under the jurisdiction of British officials only. Even in civil courts, where Qāḍis officially ruled, there was a British official present at all times, who was to sign and approve verdicts.[105] That official might not have interfered in the course of decision-making, but he nevertheless was a constant reminder for someone like al-Bahlānī about who actually supervised the procedure. If there is one domain in Islam considered a most sacred one it is that of the Sharī'a laws. Criminal or civilian, they all belonged to that same divinely-ordained body of legislation. For those laws to change and for Qāḍīs – guarding the sanctity of the Sharī'a -- to be replaced by 'Christian' colonial officials was a profane act in the eyes of many, including al-Bahlānī.

An analysis of his poetry reveals the intensity and persistence of his anti-colonial tone. The fact that al-Bahlānī repeatedly expressed his agony towards

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[104] Ibid., 41-42.
[105] Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea*, 233.

colonialism, sometimes openly and more often than not allusively, is an indication of the impact of the colonial factor in shaping his religious and political thought. The support of and pride in the *nahḍa*, the call upon Muslims to unite and rebel, the vivid description of the weakness and humiliation of Muslims and the criticism of Muslims for abandoning the Sharī'a, all were themes shaped by the reality of colonialism. Below is an analysis of those themes as they appeared in several of al-Bahlānī's poems.

His poems were written in two distinctive genres: mystical in forms of prayers and supplications, and inflammatory being occasioned by the *nahḍa* events. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, whether spiritual or political, his poems served the same purpose. Spiritualism was another way to invoke God in al-Bahlānī's battle against colonialism. Many of his prayers were calls upon God to defeat the enemies and protect the Sharī'a, render Muslims victorious and help them establish God's rules on earth. Obviously, al-Bahlānī who felt incapable of resisting his enemy, let alone defeat it, found in prayer to God his only refuge.

In the collection found in his *Dīwān*, he composed a poem for each name and/or attribute of God. There was repentance, devotion, prayer and meditation and there was much bitterness, anxiety and helplessness when referring to his enemy. But there was also hope and anticipation --hope in God's ability to defeat that enemy and anticipation of the ultimate victory of Muslims. While God as the Merciful, the Compassionate and the Forgiver was invoked to wash away his sins, answer his prayers and accept his repentance, God the Powerful, the Just, and the Avenger was recalled to destroy and defeat al-Bahlānī's enemy, humiliate and weaken him.

Meanwhile, He was to empower and strengthen the author and his fellow Muslims and assist them in their holy struggle against their opponent.[106] Only then would justice be restored and divine wisdom revealed. Al-Bahlānī had no doubt that his enemy was the same as God's because that enemy was despotic, unjust and tyrannical, oppressing people and transgressing God's laws. That enemy was the "presumptuous and repressive force that enslaved the best *umma* and challenged God the Avenger… It dominated earth and harmed Islam... God, Quicken your punishment for they [the enemies] have humiliated Islam!"[107]

The tone in his poems about God's attributes was becoming increasingly tense with time. Al-Bahlānī was gradually losing patience with his enemy and feeling the heavy burden of seeing the Sharī'a abandoned and Muslims defeated. "This foe", he said, "is making every effort to fight God; his power has burdened humanity. It assaulted Islam, tricked believers and conquered their lands... God, rescue the glory of monotheism by defeating the most evil nation."[108]

Al-Bahlānī envisioned a decisive battle being fought between Muslims with God on their side on one hand and their enemy on the other. Despite his desperation and growing impatience with his enemy's rising power, he firmly believed a day would come when that enemy would be defeated. What most upset him was the undisputable current supremacy of that enemy, his arrogance and his total disregard for the Sharī'a, paralleled by the author's helplessness and inability to bring changes. From time to time he would call upon Muslim heroes and fighters to assemble and

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[106] Those themes are repeated in several poems listing Divine attributes. See, for example, Nāṣif, *Dīwān*, 29-30, 35-37, 57-58, 69-70, 77-78, 96-97, 99, 103-105.
[107] Ibid., 77-78.
[108] Ibid., 96.

fight their enemy but he also believed this required divine intervention to assist in destroying the evil and re-establishing the tenets of Islam. This attitude, however, changed radically after he witnessed the triumph of *al-nahḍa* in Oman. His optimism and faith were restored and his hopes replenished by the Omani *nahḍa*, which he considered the beginning of an anti-colonial mission and a quest to reinstate the honor of the Muslim *umma*. In support and praise of the *nahḍa*, in both condemnation and provocation of Muslims, in lamentation and glorification of Islam, he wrote several inflammatory poems.

They are compiled in al-Sālimī's *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, and not in al-Bahlānī's *Dīwān*. Except for one, they have no specific date of publication though they seem to have been organized according to a certain chronological order. In any case, their content suggests a reasonable time framework. The first poem was *al-maqṣūra*,[109] which seems to have been composed right when the *nahḍa* was gathering momentum and its leaders were seeking alliances within Oman. Al-Bahlānī was celebrating that moment and assisting the *nahḍa* leaders by motivating and inciting Omanis to support the movement. Those events awakened in him a nostalgia for Oman, now that in his eyes it was about to change its course of history.[110] The country he left in 1888 was turned into a symbol of resistance and defiance. This nostalgic appeal was a prelude to the significance of events taking place there. He then moved to describe, rather indirectly, the necessity of the *nahḍa*. He portrayed a desperate oppressed person, a

[109] Most of his poems have no title and thus are named after the Arabic alphabet letter that constitutes the last letter of each verse. *Al-maqṣūra* refers to the *Alif* -the first letter in the alphabet- in its shortened form at the end of the word.
[110] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 241-243.

helpless widow, a poor orphan and a slain worshipper.[111] This disgrace, he lamented, was only met with fear and bitterness among Muslims. What Muslims should rather do in order to protect their sanctuaries, honor, religion and livelihood was to use their swords to rectify the situation, to engage in a fierce battle against the oppressor and plan well ahead for this encounter.[112] Only such a battle would please God, bring back glory, and restore the dignity of Islam and Muslims.[113] Al-Bahlānī imagined that battle taking place and armies engaged within a context closer to that of a *malḥama*, a genre of poetry detailing heroic scenes of combat, from which the poet's heroes emerge victorious. This rather medieval style of poetry was revivified by al-Bahlānī to redraw images of triumph and success, images he hoped he would witness in his lifetime.

However, he was quick to remember that this encounter was yet to come. He returned to a more pessimistic tone full of anguish and driven by a wounded spirit, searching for rescue. In this context, he did mention by name those causing agony and whom he identified as the British (*inglīzuhum*) –something he rarely did.[114]

> They control your fortune and livelihood…
> They bestow on you a favor by providing food for your babies, water and air..
> Your blood had been shed and your honor had been injured.
> All what we do is to complain to each other in vain…
> We are suppressed by the wicked who has no religion, no wisdom, no grace…[115]

If Muslims were not worried about their livelihood, they should be at least concerned about their sovereignty and their Sharī'a, which belonged to them and not to their enemy.

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[111] Ibid., 247.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid., 248.
[114] Ibid., 249.
[115] Ibid, 249-250.

They slaughtered your sovereignty and their knife is at the throat of your religion.
Your independence, Oh you brave!, has become a prey for the dogs of fire.
What a shame to be an *umma* who lives in humiliation and is a target for attack.
We are overwhelmed by disgrace and ruled by the depraved.[116]

In this fiery poem, as in the following ones, al-Bahlānī ceased counting on God's intervention alone as the only way to salvation, as was the case in his more spiritually inclined poems. What he wanted now was swords to be unsheathed. Swords alone could reinstate the honor of the *umma*, establish justice, and relieve Muslims from tyranny.[117] He moved on to call upon young men, on followers of Islam, of the Qur'an, of monotheism and of freedom to defend their sovereignty and faith. He reminded them that past heroes were no more than role models who could no longer come to their rescue. They, alone, could save their present and refashion it.[118] He moved between provocation and reprimand, hope and despair. His ultimate purpose was to incite those who were still skeptical about the aims of al-Sālimī's *nahḍa* and uncertain about joining its ranks. However, although the poem was occasioned by the *nahḍa* momentum and it addressed those in doubt of its mission or usefulness, it did not speak to Omanis alone. 'Muslims' in general were his intended audience.

His *nūniyya* entitled *al-Fatḥ wa al-riḍwān fi al-sayf wa al-imān* (Conquest and Assent by Sword and Faith) printed in Egypt in April 27, 1914 (in the al-Bārūniyya press owned by Sulaymān al-Bārūnī), remains the most famous of his poems, still

[116] Ibid., 250.
[117] Ibid., 251.
[118] Ibid., 251-252.

celebrated today by many Omanis.[119] As in his *maqṣūra*, the opening of this poem contained memories of his childhood in Oman. This time Oman was the *waṭan* (homeland), as he called it, and Zanzibar the *ghurba*, the exile, the place away from home.[120] This was in contrast to a previous statement about the joyful life he was having in 'defiant' Zanzibar, where he was enjoying the company of honorable Arabs.[121] This powerful and unprecedented longing for a return to Oman was induced by the *nahḍa*. It reminded him that this was the land of the *khilāfa* (Caliphate), the seat of the *Imams*, from al-Juland to 'Azzān.[122] Had Zanzibar risen against the enemy the way Oman did it might not have become a strange place for him. Al-Bahlānī defined his relationship to Oman and Zanzibar in terms of how each was dealing with colonialism. The one ready for confrontation was preferred over the other.

This specific poem lacked the tone of hopelessness and despair found in previous ones. Now that the *nahḍa* had renewed his confidence in the possibility to introduce changes, al-Bahlānī reconstructed the past of Oman and its *Imams* as one characterized by justice, righteousness and piety. Old heroes were not role models anymore, as he had advised his audience in a previous poem, but were rather the embodiment of Truth itself, a memory to reckon on. They "are my guiding light, whose admiration leads to forgiveness and exoneration. My Imāms provide me with

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[119] *Nūniyya* means that each verse in the poem ends with the letter N. Al-Sālimī provided neither the title nor the date of the poem but a copy of the original poem can be found at the Ministry of Culture and Heritage under the title stated above and has the publication date. The publication date appears to be about a year later than the composition date. The *nūniyya* must have been written before June 1913 since al-Bahlāni harshly reprimanded 'Īsā bin Ṣāliḥ for not joining the *nahḍa*. 'Īsā, however, did join the *nahḍa* on June 22, 1913. See al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 165. The copy of the poem used and quoted here is that published in al-Sālimī's *tuḥfa* for the sake of consistency.

[120] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 256.

[121] Al-Ṣulaybī, *Qirā'āt*, 44.

[122] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 258.

support and are my saviors."[123] So powerfully did the achievements of the *nahḍa* and of his Ibadi compatriots loom in his consciousness that he now wrote one of his most oft-quoted statements on Ibadism, claiming that God did not accept any religion but that of Ibadis and that their guidance was the only acceptable one.[124] Nowhere else was he so exclusive, not even in the *nahrawāniyya*.

The *nahḍa* came to reassure al-Bahlānī that Ibadis remained the leading 'heroes' of Islam and the 'rebels' defending the honor of Islam and not that of their sect alone. This statement, however, should not stand against the evidence of his pan-Islamist approach and agenda. He was, after all, concerned about Muslims and Islam in general. Before the news of *al-nahḍa*, Ibadis, in his eyes, were no different from other Muslims: helpless and indifferent to humiliation. Their success was largely due to the Ibadi ideology and driven by Ibadi belief in rebellion to restore justice.

This *nūniyya* also praised the newly installed Imām al-Kharūṣī, confirming his eligibility. It was also a prelude to a call upon Omanis to support their Imām and to unsheathe their swords to rescue the widows and the orphans, to protect the sanctuaries of Islam and to avenge the spilled blood of Muslims.[125] Al-Bahlānī was an unrivaled master of incitement and provocation. He appealed to his audience by his constantly making associations between a despicable present situation and a magnificent past, by contrasting the present idleness of Arab tribes to their past bravery and epic performance in battles. He allocated to each Omani tribe a place in Omani history, pleading with them to lend al-Kharūṣī their support.[126] Those would be

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[123] Ibid., 259.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid., 261-263.
[126] Ibid., 263-266.

the 'Phalanges of Allah', who should not let their land be "occupied by a foe who has all bad intentions towards Islam",[127] and who should "defend their faith that has been contaminated by pigs and crosses."[128] This was, again, one of the few instances where al-Bahlānī was more explicit about the nature of the enemy to whom he kept referring. There is no doubt that the 'enemy' he was most troubled and occupied by was European colonialism and what it entailed in terms of 'Christian' rule over Muslims and disgrace of Muslim pride.

In another *mimiyya*, al-Bahlānī's confidence in the *nahḍa* and in all Muslims seems to have been at its peak. This poem diverged from the rest with its unusually optimistic tone and lack of reprimand and rebuke to Muslims for their failure to defend their religion. It focused on pride in victory, confidence in ultimate triumph and tribute to heroes and courageous fighters who reinstated the seat of the Imamate.[129] As in before, al-Bahlānī introduced his poem with an outpouring of nostalgic feelings toward Oman, indeed, his painful nostalgia seems to have increased with every success the *nahḍa* made. Each achievement caused him more agony as he was not able to share those successes and play a role in shaping those events. The reason he could not leave for Oman and make his dream come true was the 'enemies having power over him,'[130] who were displeased with his sympathy and outward support for al-Kharūṣī. Those were the "foreigners of the cross" who, al-Bahlānī

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[127] Ibid., 267.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Al-Sālimī, *Nahḍat al-a'yān*, 273.
[130] Ibid., 272.

explained, had tried several times to vainly intimidate him to turn his back on the Imamate.[131]

'Africa', as he mentioned, became a forced exile where he was to spend the rest of his life, unable to use his sword, unable to gain a much desired martyrdom and unable to witness the grandeur of *al-Nahrawān* replayed in Oman.[132] For him, the *nahḍa* was an echo of *al-Nahrawān*, and more significantly, was the successful conclusion of 'Azzān's *nahḍa*. Moreover, it was to avenge the death of his hero and mentor al-Khalīlī, whose spilled blood should not be forgotten.[133] He concluded warning those among Omanis who were still supporting "the worshippers of the cross".[134]

The following *'ayniyya* dealt with al-Bahlānī's usual concerns but was primarily in response to European criticism of Islam, the Qur'an, the Sunna and the Sharī'a. It is not clear what the source of that criticism was; it could have emanated from Zanzibar or Egypt. Al-Bahlānī urged Muslims to refute the allegations that Islam was a source of darkness and a hindrance to progress, and that Muslims were savages.[135] In a sarcastic tone, al-Bahlānī told his readers that time had come to leave religion behind in order to civilize, to ignore God's commandments, and to believe in naturalist theories rather than divine ordinance.[136] This assault on Islam, he wrote,

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[131] Ibid., 278.
[132] Ibid. When al-Kharūṣī died and al-Khalīlī was elected as his successor, al-Bahlānī wrote to him lamenting the death of al-Kharūṣī and asking for his intervention to facilitate his return to Oman. It is not clear with whom al-Khalīlī was supposed to intervene and in what way but what was clear was the fact that al-Bahlānī was not allowed to leave Zanzibar. The fact that al-Bahlānī was not clear enough is another indication that he was watched over carefully and could not openly criticize his opponents or his 'enemy'. Al-Maḥrūqī, *Al-Shi'r al-'umānī al-hadīth*, 157-58.
[133] Al-Sālimī, *nahḍat al-a'yān*, 275.
[134] Ibid., 278.
[135] Ibid., 279.
[136] Ibid., 280.

took place only because Muslims themselves had abandoned their religious teachings and duties, had become unjust and had been fighting each other. Worst of all was the fact that

> this religion has been torn into different sects (*madhāhib*).
> It is one religion but what we see [the different sects] is straying from the right path and following desires.
> I wish the followers [of Islam] had not been divided and that religion would unite them…
> Islam has been slaughtered by our own swords, unsheathed against each other…
> Divisions in Islam caused by the sword of its enemy are not as severe as those caused by the swords of its own people.[137]

Typical of the reformist thought, al-Rawāḥi regarded divisions among Muslims as the main source of their weakness. Division and rivalry had caused Muslims more harm than that perpetrated by their external enemies. The source of defeat and humiliation Muslims endured emanated from within, and their inability to overcome their shortcomings was faced by divine punishment. This punishment, according to al-Bahlānī, manifested itself in allowing polytheists to rule over Muslims.[138] Surely, al-Bahlānī was not ascribing justice to his enemies whom he considered as tyrannical as those Muslims whom God had punished. He was rather trying to affirm his belief in the ultimate wisdom and fairness of God by analyzing the grievous and lamentable state of Muslims as part of a normal course of history. It was a simple equation perpetuated by many other reformers: because Muslims were not united and were indifferent to the laws of the Sharī'a, God had given their foes power over them.

In this poem, al-Bahlānī ceased to see colonialism as a *casus belli* and hence did not use his usual rhetoric of incitement and provocation. He had to surrender to the

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[137] Ibid., 281.
[138] Ibid., 282.

thought that his enemy was, somehow, undefeated. However, if Muslims wanted to witness a turn of fortune, they should look at Oman where the Imamate had become a prototype for Muslims seeking liberation and salvation.[139] In response to an unidentified poet who was mourning the condition of Arabs because of their inability to achieve any victory or success, al-Bahlānī wrote drawing the poet's attention to the achievements of the *nahḍa*. The *nahḍa* was a victory against the enemies and a movement that saved the face of Arabs. He reassured Mashriqis (Easterners) that Omanis would ultimately take revenge for them and defend them.[140]

Al-Bahlānī in Perspective

Al-Bahlānī represented the pro-Imamate Omanis in Zanzibar, whose support for the Imamate and antagonism toward the British manifested themselves at different times and in different ways. Poetry was one of al-Bahlānī's own ways by which he showed his support for the *nahḍa* as well as his animosity toward colonialism. Moreover, he represented the enlightened elite –enlightened in its global vision and interaction with a world of ideas and theories on Muslim unity and Islamic rejuvenation and reform. Those ideas crosscut in Zanzibar and represented themselves in the thought of someone like al-Bahlānī. A blend of Ibadi renewal, of pan-Islamism, reform and anti-colonial rhetoric molded his intellectual career and the intellectual mood of a large section of Omanis and other Arabs in Zanzibar.

Al-Bahlānī considered Ibadism the inspirational ideology much needed to implement changes and believed in its effectiveness to rectify a lamentable reality. However, he had no illusions about the fact that his world required more than rhetoric

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[139] Ibid., 284-85.
[140] Al-Sulaybī, *Qirā'āt*, 19-21.

about Muslim reform and unity. He crafted a 'vision', a 'plan' as outlined in his letter for al-Kharūṣī, revealing the way he had absorbed ideas on pan-Islamism and Islamic reform. He was one of those turn-of-the-century Muslim intellectuals who not only embraced the pan-Islamist ideology but also fully embodied a collective Muslim identity created amidst the agony of colonization. His strong allegiance to and pride in his Ibadi sect did not prevent him from embracing other Muslims and adopting pan-Islamist views to bring Ibadis and other Muslims together. This was part of his view of Islamic reform and for this reason, he believed reform in Oman was not complete without reform in its external policy, which primarily involved a pan-Islamist approach.

Pan-Islamism was not the only feature that labeled him a reformer. It was mostly his approach to Islam in terms of the necessity to understand it comprehensively, binding both faith and politics, and making political thought an integral part of the religious framework. The Imamate or the religio-political state was to assume its responsibilities as a political organ fulfilling its civil as well as religious obligations. Its power, however, was to be checked and regulated by the process of consultation, a process considered by someone like 'Abduh as the remedy for social and political ills in Muslim societies.[141] For al-Bahlānī, it was the key factor to establishing a just and strong Muslim rule.

Another characteristic of his reformist approach was his awareness of modern means of communications as a tool to disseminate his views. Reliance on the press for mass communication was a craft pioneered by reformers in the Arab world –especially

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[141] Kerr, *Islamic Reform*, 140.

in Egypt-- and beyond.[142] The first attempt to replicate the press experience in Zanzibar was made by al-Bahlānī when he established *al-Najāḥ*, a step that inaugurated a new chapter of intellectual endeavor on the island. In addition, the term *iṣlāḥ* that he gave to his party and included as the motto for his newspaper held significant connotation at the time. It was a term with particular resonance in the Arab East, mainly within the Salafi circles to which *iṣlāḥ* was the leading way to rejuvenate Islam and unite Muslims in order to face colonial challenges.

Moreover, like other Muslim reformers, he believed that the early history of Islam was the ideal phase and the most sacred moment in Islamic history. The time of the Prophet and the Caliphs was the source of inspiration that could enlighten Muslims and offer guidance.[143] The Prophet and his successor Caliphs exemplified the convergence of faith and politics, a combination al-Bahlānī thought would put Oman and Muslims on the road to salvation. Moreover, the era of the *salaf* was a compelling force that could provoke Muslims and motivate them. The scope of that period, however, included the battle of *al-nahrawān* and the *salaf* included the *shurāt* who fought that battle sacrificing their lives for the sake of Islam and a just rule.

Another feature of the Salafi-reform ideology was self-criticism and the attempt to examine the inner roots of weakness and corruption. Al-Bahlānī excelled at attributing defeat of Muslims to their own shortcomings. Thus, he understood colonialism as either a punishment to or a natural result of the degrading status of

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[142] One can cite, for instance, *al-'Urwa al-wuthqa* of al-Afghānī, *al-Manār* of Rashīd Rida, *al-Nibrās* by al-Shammākhī and *al-Asad al-islāmī* of al-Bārūnī as pan-Islamist and reform-oriented periodicals in the pre-war period. The inter-war period witnessed a sharp increase in the number of periodicals devoted to reform and pan-Islamism such as *al-Zahrā'* and *al-Fatḥ* of Muḥib al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Shihāb* of ibn Bādīs, *al-Minhāj* by Ibrāhīm Aṭfiyyash, in addition to *al-Manār* that ceased to appear in 1935.

[143] For Ibadis, the rightly-guided Caliphs are Abū Bakr and 'Umar only. 'Uthmān and 'Alī are not regarded with similar veneration.

Muslims, caused by internal divisions, uncompromising rivalries, weakness, and distance from religious guidance. Those were, according to al-Bahlānī and many Muslim reformers, the key factors to understanding the demeaning condition of Muslims. The polemic side of his poetry was balanced by self-criticism and acknowledgement of the fact that victory was a process that required inner reform before anything else.

Chapter V
Zanzibar in the Interwar Period: The Ideology of Islam and Arabism

Introduction

Al-Bahlānī's death in 1920 signaled the death of a generation of Ibadi ulama who were the pillars of fin-de-siècle Ibadi renaissance, advocates of pan-Islamism and critics of colonialism. Al-Bahlānī in Zanzibar, al-Sālimī in Oman and Aṭfiyyash in Algeria represented the generation who fostered religious renewal, both in its literary and political form. Their deaths, however, neither altered the Ibadi discourse of Islamic renewal nor put an end to Ibadi involvement in Arabism and pan-Islamism. They were followed by a generation of Ibadi ulama, writers, and journalists, especially in the Mizab and Zanzibar, who followed in their footsteps in advocating Islamic reform and Islamic unity and whose anti-colonial rhetoric was increasingly sharp in tone. They were either students of the first generation, as with Aṭfiyyash's pupils his nephew Ibrāhīm and al-Bārūnī, or were lay persons such as al-Maskarī in Zanzibar. Their identities were molded by Islam as a system of beliefs, as a historical legacy and as an anti-colonial ideology.[1]

Like the earlier generation, they maintained their networks of connections and ties of identity within the frameworks of Ibadism, Arabism and Islamism. Their realities, however, were even more bitter than those of their mentors. The center of gravity of the Muslim world, the Ottoman dynasty, vanished after World War I. Istanbul came under the rule of a secular nationalist regime that denounced pan-Islamism, reconfigured the Ottoman legacy and redefined the role of what was once

[1] By lay persons I refer to individuals who were not ulama and had no religious title but whose thought and writings were molded by Islam and Islamic beliefs.

the heart of the Muslim world. The remnants of the largest Muslim dynasty were now prey to European powers that by now had established their mandates over the Mashriq as well as the Maghrib. That only served to widen and highlight the commonality of the colonial experience in the eyes of many Arabs; now even those once within Ottoman boundaries had become subjects of colonialism. How to change that fate was a task many Arabs discussed and debated collectively. The Omani elite in Zanzibar took part in that discussion.

In this chapter, I first argue that the scholarship continues to downplay the continuing influence of Islam during the interwar period as marker of an identity and rather concentrates on the emergence of secular nationalist ideologies. Despite the rise of territorial nationalisms during the interwar period, Islam remained the kernel of identity and the central ideology for many Arabs, including those in Zanzibar. I then explore the ways in which that identity was articulated and that ideology employed by the Omani elite in order to voice opposition to British policies on the one hand and to strengthen ties with the Arab-Muslim world on the other. The contents of *al-Falaq* newspaper provide a concrete example of the continuing influence of Islam on shaping both the Omani elite's identity and its anti-colonial discourse during the interwar period. Omanis saw in the educational system crafted by the British an attempt to de-Arabize and de-Islamize Zanzibaris and Zanzibar and they considered Arab unity a force that would weaken colonialism and shield Zanzibar. The Arab unity they propagated would certainly give, in their opinion, a foundation to a *waṭan* for both Arabs and Swahilis and maintain the island's Arab-Muslim identity. Yet their advocacy for Islam and Arab unity was not a mere political strategy or a convenient tactic but, as shown below, a product of their own beliefs, of their own networks and

of their association with movements and individuals whose discourse revolved around Islam and Arabism as markers of a collective identity and as anti-colonial ideologies.

Interwar Islam: Identity and Ideology

As previously discussed, many Muslim communities outside Ottoman boundaries, as well as those within, gravitated towards Istanbul in support of its anti-colonial pan-Islamism. The dynasty was, in their eyes, the shield of *dār al-Islām*, the defendant of its political and geographic integrity, and the guardian of its religion. Its existence was necessary and vital for the preservation of the faith. Even criticism leveled against Ottoman rule by prominent Muslim reformers such as al-Afghānī, 'Abduh and Ridā aimed at providing ways to strengthen and empower the dynasty to face European threats and protect Islam. The collapse of the dynasty, thus, was cataclysmic. Not only did its collapse result in the fragmentation of *dār al-Islām* and defamation of its sanctity but also in its complete vulnerability to European colonialism. It was not a mere battle Muslims lost to Europeans; it was a victory for *dār al-ḥarb*, the traditional adversary of *dār al-Islām*.

In an earlier attempt to diminish the vulnerability of *dār al-Islām* to both ascending European threats and rising separatist movements inside the dynasty, Ottomans had introduced the concept of 'Ottomanism'. The *millet* system[2] was to be replaced by Ottoman citizenship. However, after the loss of the Balkans in the 1870s, the majority of the Ottoman population was Muslim. Sultan 'Abd al-Hamīd II's definition of Ottomanism, as a result of this demographic change and of his pan-

[2] The *millet* was a non-Muslim religious community inside the Ottoman dynasty, usually designating the Jewish and the Christian communities. A *millet* would normally be granted autonomy in its religious and legal affairs and would normally be subject to a tax, a *jizyah*, in return for its exemption from service in the army of the Islamic state.

Islamist policy, differed from that of his predecessors. His was one crafted to appeal to that Muslim majority and to cultivate its religious feelings. Thus, his version of Ottomanism was one "equipped with ideological embellishment deriving from Islam… It has been ascribed as a pragmatic policy that availed of Islamic symbols and upheld the Ottoman state's Islamic identity and the Muslim subjects' morale following losses in war."[3] It was, indeed, no more than an embodiment of that majority's Islamism, no more than an embellishment, to use Kayali's word. Thus, when Ottomanism faded away after 1918, Islamism remained and prevailed. The post-Ottoman pan-Islamic rhetoric leaned on that deep-rooted Islamism that had defined the collective identity of Muslims for centuries.

However, the disintegration of the dynasty caused a severe blow to the legacy of *dār al-islām*. The latter was not only defined by its Muslim inhabitants but also by the political umbrella that had protected and expanded its boundaries. Certainly, *dār al-islām* was not confined to the Ottoman dynasty alone but the latter --as the largest Muslim dynasty, the protector of the Holy Sanctuaries and the sword of Islam unsheathed against *dār al-ḥarb* -- was the center of that Muslim domain. Following on its collapse after World War I, *dār al-islām* became a vulnerable geography spiritually bound, but politically fragmented and dismembered. Worst of all, it was colonized. How to liberate it and reconstitute it as an *umma* were questions many Muslims pondered; they generated much discussion and much activity among those to whom Islam was the only ideology and the *umma* the only conceivable community.

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[3] Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 31.

Yet, the present historiography continues to downplay or overlook the influence of those to whom Islam remained a strong political ideology and the anchor of identity. In his assessment of the degree to which that historiography has overlooked this particular group, Cleveland has observed that it was the fault of historians who

> regarded secular nationalism as the doctrine which, in either its liberal or totalitarian form, would emerge as the dominant Middle Eastern ideology… Those who had tenaciously borne, and continued to bear, the responsibility of the Islamic tradition came to be regarded by the new political elite of Arab society, as by some Western observers, as reactionary enemies of progress.[4]

Another reason cited by Cleveland was the prevalent idea in Western scholarship that this group did not break new ground and did not produce seminal thinkers but was spearheaded by pamphleteers and propagandists.[5] It may be unfair to empty such a large movement from 'thinkers' but in all cases, as Cleveland rightly notices in his commentary on the writings and anti-colonial activities of Shakīb Arslān, they "reflected the longings of a large segment of educated Arab-Muslims."[6] Arslān was not alone in his campaign and many more like him among Arabs (and non-Arabs) championed the cause of Islam as a uniting force, a source of reform and an anti-colonial ideology.

Cleveland's analysis of the career of the Lebanese notable Arslān sheds light on the vigor of 'Islamic nationalism' during the interwar period. Arslān's activities, and more significantly, connections and networks revealed the depth and breadth of that ideology and its supporters. The author's findings are perhaps best summarized in the following quotation:

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[4] Cleveland, *Islam against the West*, xx.
[5] Ibid., xxi.
[6] Ibid.

> The Arab-Islamic world had not yet accepted secular nationalism as its organizing principle, and many of its activists were prepared to endorse Arslan's use of Islam as a political and cultural weapon unencumbered with teleological justifications more complex than the basic assurance that activism was permitted.... He clearly carried with him the outlook of an earlier era, but the ideals of that era had not entirely vanished. Arslan served as a conduit for the expression of hopes and fears which had existed before 1914 and which, far from being dissolved in the crucible of war, were exacerbated by it.[7]

As Cleveland argued in a subsequent article, Islamic activism in the late 1920s marked a triumph for those who, during the late Ottoman period and during World War I, championed Islamic solidarity and its capability of defending Islam and the Muslim community against Europe.[8] Yet the revealing aspect of Arslān's career was its lack of geographic limitations or boundaries. Arslān represented Islamic nationalism not in Greater Syria, or in Egypt or in the Maghrib but in all of them.

Cleveland has, on the one hand, bridged the Ottoman era with the post-Ottoman one in terms of the continuity, if not radicalization, of Islam as a uniting force and as a collective identity among a significant number of Arab intellectuals and political activists, not to mention the general public. On the other hand, he has attested to the pervasiveness of that force and that identity over others during the interwar period, especially over the force of secular Arab nationalism and identities formed outside a religious framework. In addition, the work on Arslān in particular provides, rather indirectly and implicitly, a showcase for how Islam's global dynamics presented themselves, to repeat Owen's words, "in the compass of an individual life."

Cleveland's findings notwithstanding, most recent studies on nationalism in the Middle East continue to marginalize, if not ignore, the persistence of Islam during

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[7] Cleveland, *Islam against the West,* 131.
[8] Cleveland, "The Role of Islam as Political Ideology," 84-101.

the interwar period as the essential element in defining identities.[9] An exception can be attributed to the work of Gershoni and Jankowski in *Redefining the Egyptian Nation.* Not only did it reveal that Islamic identity was alive and well in Egypt, but also that it was expanding and reenergizing. The appearance in the 1930s of what is referred to as the *Islāmiyyāt* literature (literature about Islam and with Islamic themes), and the establishment of Islamic associations and periodicals with a pan-Islamist orientation, indicated what the authors call a 'return' of Islam to the political and intellectual life of Egyptian society.[10] Whether that was a return or persistence with increasing vigor is not the issue here. What is crucial is that a more assertive and forceful wave of Islamism and Arabism was manifest in Egypt and that a large segment of the Egyptian population –intellectuals and general public-- continued to define themselves in terms of those elements. The significance of this trend in Egypt spills beyond Egyptian borders. Egypt, being a nodal point between the Fertile Crescent and the Maghrib, being the meeting place of many active exiles from those two regions and being the main center of the publishing industry in the Arab world, was at the time the barometer of the Arab world's ideological currents. In other words, Gershoni and Jankowski's redefinition of the Egyptian nation in the 1930s was, by

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[9] In *Redefining Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* for example, none of the contributors included 'Islamic nationalism' during the interwar period within the scope of redefining nationalism, with the exception of Musa Budeiri's brief discussion of Islamic identity and Islam as an ideology of resistance in the case of Mandate Palestine. See Gershoni and Jankowski, *Rethinking Nationalism*, 191-206. Dawisha, for example, completely downplayed if not ignored, the role of Islam as a competing identity to Arab nationalism in its secular version as expounded by al-Ḥusri during the interwar period. "Powerful competitive identities," he commented, "such as tribalism, sectarianism, regionalism, and state nationalism *(waṭaniya)* individually, or in combination with each other, proved to be potent obstacles to the spread of an Arab identity." Idem, *Arab Nationalism,* 105. Islam, unlike regionalism or state nationalism, did promote an Arab identity in the Arab world but competed fiercely during the interwar period with an exclusive Arab identity that was not supplemented or complemented by a pan-Islamic identity. To this argument Dawisha paid no attention.

[10] Even *al-Hilāl*, with its Christian management, became during the interwar period more focused on Arab-Islamic subjects. See Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation,* 62.

association, a redefinition of the Arab nation in terms of Islam's continuous role in fashioning its collective identity.

Thus, seen from across regions and borders and through the prism of the whole Arab world, Arab-Islamism looks an even more vigorous movement than suggested by Cleveland and larger than depicted by Gershoni and Jankowski. Arslān was a prototype of many others who held his beliefs, fought his battles and shared his Arab-Islamic identity. He was one among a number of Muslim reformers who championed Islamic ideology and continued to defend a collective identity shaped by that ideology. They were influenced by the Salafi line of thought promoting Islamic solidarity and reform. More important, those reformers were a key force behind the cultural *nahḍa* known as Arabism that emerged by the end of the nineteenth century and that resurrected the Arab literary heritage.[11] They believed that the early history of Islam, the history of the *salaf*, the first generation of Muslims, was the ideal and glorious period in Islamic history. A projection of this past into the present was necessary if Muslims were to implement reforms. The *salaf* of Muslims were Arabs, and it is under their rule, especially that of the Righteous Caliphs but also that of the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids, that Islam created its great civilization and reached its magnificent moments. Arabism became a requirement for Islamic reform and an Arab *nahḍa* was essential to an Islamic *nahḍa*. Moreover, Islamic reform required *ijtihād* and *ijtihād* could not be exercised without mastery of the Arabic language, the language of Islam, its sacred text and its legal corpus. It was that language that defined Arabness and united Arabs among themselves and with other Muslims to whom Arabic was as sacred as the religion itself. While this nourished an Arab identity, it was one that

[11] Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism," 3-30.

enhanced and complemented the Muslim identity and did not supercede or replace it. This ethnic self-consciousness, however, did not develop into a political agenda under Ottoman rule; when it did so after World War I within the circles of Muslim reformers it was conceived as the leading way to Islamic unity, the stepping stone to reform and the effective ideology against colonialism. Any mention of Arab unity based on language, "was used to re-enforce religious, not national solidarity."[12]

Islamism and Arabism became two sides of the same coin, in sharp contrast with the secular version of Arab nationalism. In the eyes of Arab pan-Islamists, "Arabism was not something distinct from Islam; the two phenomena existed in symbiosis."[13] They fought tooth and nail against exclusive Arab nationalism, not to mention regional nationalisms, because Arab unity was perceived as a step on the road to reuniting the Muslim *umma* and reassembling *dār al-Islām*, and not itself the ultimate goal. This intertwining between Arabism and Islamism explains, for instance, the advocacy of Arabism even by reformers of Berber origin.[14] They saw Arabism through the prism of Islamic reform and unity. It was such a strong component of a religious identity that even non-Arab reformers were willing to contribute to its cause.

All of the above points to the fact that the argument about the interwar period witnessing a closure of Islam's global dynamics needs to be reassessed. Harper's notion that [t]he goal of Islamic universalism was sacrificed to that of nation statehood,"[15] and that "[t]he interwar period represented the end of *fin de siècle*

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[12] Cleveland, "Islam as Political Ideology," 92.
[13] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, 91.
[14] Ibrāhīm Aṭfiyyash's contributions in the field of Arabic language is a case in point. His advocacy for Arabism also appeared in his *al-di'āya*, 98-102. See also Yasir Suleiman's brief reference to the support of Arabic against French in the first half of the twentieth century among Berbers in Algeria and Morocco. Idem, *The Arabic Language*, 11.
[15] Harper, "Empire, Diaspora and the Languages of Globalism," 160.

globalism and the beginning of *la tyrannie du national*"[16] is not a very accurate one, as far as the Arab world was concerned. Territorial nationalism, represented by nation-statehood, had not been at the time a readily available alternative adopted by the masses or by a significant number of Arab intellectuals. Nation states were still seen by many as organs of the same body and their borders as colonial constructs that should be dismantled. It is clear from the aforementioned discussion that Islam and Islamic solidarity remained a far more appealing ideology. It was more encompassing; it bonded Muslims to a broader region and to a global community. In any case, it is one thing for territorial nationalist ideologies and nation-states to prevent the unity scheme from materializing and it is another thing for them to have an impact on the discourse of Islamic universalism itself or on the conception of a collective identity transcending borders.

However, the global dynamics of Islam must have witnessed a recession during and right after the end of World War I. The pan-Islamist propaganda carried on during the war by the Ottoman government, and the *jihad* declaration in November 1914 calling upon Muslims to fight against France, Britain and Russia, put colonial powers on alert. They reacted by restricting the pilgrimage movement from their colonies, cracking down on anti-colonial activists by exiling them and using unprecedented measures of censorship against the press.[17] Those measures, consequently, limited global exchange among Muslims during the two Wars and shortly after. The inability of Muslims to interact explains Cleveland, Gershoni and Jankowski's arguments that the early 1920s witnessed a stagnant discourse of Islamic

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Bennison, "Muslim Universalism and Western Globalization," and Harper, "Empire, Diaspora, and the Languages of Globalism."

ideology. However, it was not too long before the ideology of Islam returned with full force. As Landau stated, "[t]he outcome of WWI and the contents of the peace treaties served as a rude shock to many Muslims, increasing their concern about the troubles of their co-religionists elsewhere."[18]

In reaction, several international conferences convened to discuss and revive the Caliphate issue.[19] The purpose was to bolster Muslim solidarity and reconstitute the Caliphate that would reunite Muslims. The main battle to keep pan-Islamism alive, however, was waged outside the conference rooms. It was carried on the pages of the press established and pioneered by pan-Islamists and was promoted by their newly established Muslim associations. Societies and associations advocating Islamic reform, Arab-Islamic unity and anti-colonialism started to appear in the mid 1920s throughout the Arab world,[20] periodicals run by reformers mushroomed and Islam's global structures were put to work again. Colonial measures to crackdown on networks and regulate Islam's global structures could only have limited effects. With the wide dissemination of the printed word and continuous interaction among Muslim communities, the circulation of ideas escaped effective control and restrictive measures. Every time colonial officials ordered the closure of one periodical another would appear. The titles would change but the content remained the same. As for the colonial policy of exiling anti-colonial activists, it only created diasporas that linked

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[18] Landau, *The Politics of pan-Islam*, 218.

[19] See, for instance, Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) and Landau, *The Politics of pan-Islam*, 234-247.

[20] Those societies flourished in both the Mashriq and the Maghrib and had links with each other. The reform movement of ibn Bādīs in Algeria, for example, appeared in the mid-1920s and culminated in the formation of *L' Association des 'Ulama Musulmans Algériens* in 1931. See Merad, *Le Réformisme Musulman*. In Tunisia, the Free Constitutional Party had been established in 1920 and remained during the interwar period influenced by pan-Arab and pan-Islamic ideologues such as al-Tha'ālibī. For more information on the Party, see Leon Carl Brown, "Stages in the Process of Change," *Tunisia: The Politics of Modernization*, ed., Charles A. Micaud (London: Pall Mall Press, 1963), 3-66.

several communities together and bolstered networks of communication. As shown in the case of Arslān for example, exile in Europe forged alliances among like-minded reformers and provided them with the means to disseminate their views. From his exile in Europe, Arslān was able to shape public opinion in the Maghrib[21] much like al-Bārūnī, in exile in Oman, was to influence Ibadis in Oman, North Africa and Zanzibar.[22] Both men appealed to Arabs and Muslims on grounds of their reputation as spokesmen for Islamic solidarity and both did so while in exile.

Those exiles formed the 'diasporic condition'[23] that contributed to maintaining Islam's global dynamics. They were the nodal point that pulled regions, movements and individuals together. As Harper has indicated, the significance of their role is "not so much the functions diasporas perform for their members, but the functions that they perform to others; how they conversed with others and the ideas that emerged from this."[24] Arslān's influence on the North African liberation movement is a case in point. Coury's biography of the Egyptian 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Azzām reveals similar observations, whereby 'Azzām's years in Europe, then Libya, molded his pan-Arab ideology, which in return helped flame pan-Arabism in Egypt.[25] Thus, if pan-Islamism or Islamic solidarity, Islamic reformism and the networks of ulama characterized global Islam then they still existed despite forced boundaries. Colonialism and secular national ideologies emboldened the anti-colonial ideology of Arab-Muslim unity and should be treated as providing the fuel for that ideology to grow.

Zanzibar: Following the Lead

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[21] See Cleveland, *Islam against the West*, chapter V.
[22] See discussion below.
[23] Harper, "Empire, Diaspora, and the Languages of Globalism," 145.
[24] Ibid., 150.
[25] Ralph Coury, *The Making of an Egyptian Arab Nationalist: the Early Years of ' Azzam Pasha, 1893-1936* (UK: Ithaca Press, 1998).

What is being said about the persistence of the ideology of Arabism and Islamism in the Arab world during the interwar period applies in the case of the Omani elite in Zanzibar as well. Zanzibar had already established links with both the Arabist and the reformist movements at the turn of the century and its Sultans had funded several of their proponents and sponsored some of their works. That material support may have ceased but the ties had not been broken. Rather, they appear to have been reinforced following World War I through the Arabic periodicals that made their way into Zanzibar in increasing numbers, as well as through the elite's connections with ulama, press editors, and the Ibadi diaspora. What buttressed the elite's Arab-Islamic identity and sharpened its discourse of Arab-Islamism were its continuous identification with that larger world and its ties with its several intellectual and political networks at one level and British policies inside Zanzibar at another level. Those policies, especially in the field of education, aimed at threatening the most sacred elements of the elite's identity: language and religion. By eroding those, Arabs believed, the British were not only trying to damage their identity and that of the island, but also trying to sever Zanzibar's relationship with the broader Arab-Muslim world.

Defending those elements and that relationship became one of the elite's most urgent tasks during the interwar period, and contrary to Lofchie's assessment, this era witnessed a strong anti-colonial political and intellectual trend among Omanis, a trend rooted in the discourse of Arabism and Islamism. "Anti-colonial protest," Lofchie claimed, "was the most striking and profoundly important political innovation of the

post-war period."[26] Explaining the roots of this 'political innovation', Lofchie referred to 'Arab nationalism' whose first stage he located between 1949 and 1953 and called a *proto-nationalist phase*.[27] In fact, anti-colonial protest had marked the intellectual and political life of the Omani elite since the late nineteenth century and was strikingly visible and articulate during the interwar period. It was neither a post-war phenomenon nor an innovation. Lofchie's wrong assessment of Omani anti-colonialism lay in his narrow definition of the identity of Omanis during the pre-war period. He defined it in socio-economic terms and thus he looked at pre-World War II politics as being "dominated by social and economic disputes among the local communities, especially among Arabs and Asians."[28] While it is true that the period was dominated by socio-economic disputes between Omanis and Indians, it was nevertheless highly charged with anti-colonialism as well. Disputes were not confined to those between the colonized themselves; they occupied much of the colonized/colonizer paradigm, i.e, the Omani/British paradigm.

The platform mostly used by Omanis (and other Arabs) to articulate that identity and voice their dissatisfaction with and opposition to the British was the weekly *al-Falaq* which first appeared in 1929 as the mouthpiece of the Arab Association.[29] *Al-Falaq* marked a new turn in the intellectual life of Arabs on the island; not only did it provide a public forum for ideas to be debated and disseminated among members of the Arabic-speaking community but it also linked Zanzibar with the wider world of the Arabic press, on which *al-Falaq* counted to report events and

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[26] Lofchie, *Background to Revolution*, 127.
[27] Ibid., 130.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Although al-Maghīrī stated that the Arab Association was founded under Sultan 'Alī, its first organizational body and its by-laws were ratified in 1920.

reprint articles on a number of subjects of interest to Arabs in Zanzibar.[30] The idea of reviving the previous experience of *al-Najāḥ* was first entertained in 1926 and was encouraged by Nāṣir al-Lamkī who, along with al-Bahlānī, had founded *al-Najāḥ*. Muḥammad bin Sa'īd bin Nāṣir al-Kindī proposed to change the newspaper's title and "*al-Falaq*" was chosen instead of "*al-Najāḥ,*"[31] and it first appeared in 1929. Its first editor was Hāshil bin Rāshid al-Maskarī (April 1929-April 1932, January 1946-October 1953, June 1954-September 1955) and one of its longest serving editors was Muḥammad bin Hilāl al-Barwānī (between May 1932 and December 1945).

Al-Falaq reached the Maghrib and Oman as well as the Mashriq. Its reputation prompted Philip de Tarrazi, the author of *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-'arabiyya* (A History of the Arab Press) to write to one of *al-Falaq*'s editors, al-Maskarī, asking him for more information about *al-Falaq* to be included in his *tārīkh*.[32] It was the Arab elite's emissary to the Arab world as well as the channel through which currents from that world made their way into Zanzibar. Nevertheless, it remained, first and foremost, the pulpit of Zanzibar's Arabs, mainly Omanis, from which they discussed local and global issues, and expressed their anti-British, anti-colonial views.

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[30] Among journals and newspapers from which *al-Falaq* reprinted articles are: *al-Ahrām, Ākhir Sā'a, al-'Alam al-'Arabī, al-Bayraq, al-Difā' al-Qawmī, Kawkab al-Sharq, al-Kifāḥ, al-Laṭā'if al-Muṣawwara, Majallat al-Azhar, al-Shabāb, al-Sharq al-'Arabī, Um al-Qurā*... The most oft-quoted newspaper, however, was *al-Fatḥ* of Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb.

[31] Muḥsin al-Kindī, *Al-Saḥāfa al-'Umāniyya*, 24.

[32] A letter from De Tarrazi to al-Maskarī. Al-Maskarī's private papers, also produced in al-Kindī, *Al-Ṣaḥāfa al-'umāniyya*, 236. De Tarrazi did include *al-Falaq*, in addition to *al-Najāḥ* and Zanzibar Gazette (in English) in his *tārīkh*, and mistakenly listed al-Maskarī as the founder of *al-Falaq*. See De Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-'arabiyya*, 270-271. De Tarrazi also commented with regret that although Zanzibar was Arab and had an Arab Sultan, it had not produced more than the three aforementioned newspapers.

The publication of *al-Falaq* coincided with the spread of periodicals in the Arab world,[33] from which *al-Falaq* was reprinting articles and news items. Especially important as a source of information was a*l-Fatḥ*, edited by Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khatīb. Al-Khatīb was born in Syria and self-exiled to Egypt in 1921, where he established and edited *al-Zahrā'*. This was followed by the weekly *al-Fatḥ*, one of the most important platforms of the Islamic-oriented discourse during the interwar period. Al-Khatīb was a skilled pamphleteer who used his journalistic talents to promote the cause of Arabism and Islam, and who strongly advocated and propagated Arab unity within the framework of Islam. He opposed any other form of unity that did not fit within that framework. Moreover, he was highly critical of colonialism, British colonialism specifically. His writings appealed to his Arab Zanzibari readers who, in their turn, used the pages of their newspaper to propagate his opinions.

The Maghribi Ibadi diaspora in the Mashriq played an equally significant role in keeping Zanzibar within the Arab orbit, and in channeling ideas of unity and reform back into Zanzibar. The modern Maghribi diaspora to the Mashriq can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century with the French invasion of Algeria.[34] Algerians were followed by Tunisians[35] who, after the imposition of the French Protectorate, left for

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[33] *Al-Fatḥ* was published in 1926, *al-Minhāj* in 1924, *al-Hidāya al-islamiyya* in 1928, *Majallat al-shubbān al-muslimīn* in 1929, *jarīdat al-ikhwān al-muslimīn* in 1933, all in Cairo, in addition to others in North Africa and the Fertile Crescent. Abī al-Yaqẓān, for example, established in Algeria eight periodicals between 1926 and 1938, closed one after the other by the French. Those periodicals were: *Wādi Mīzāb, Mīzāb, al-Maghrib, al-Nūr, al-Bustān, al-Nibrās, al-Umma* and *al-Furqān*.

[34] The *hijra* or migration of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī was the inaugurating phase of a continuous exodus of North African communities to the Mashriq. See Pierre Bardin, *Algériens et Tunisiens dans l'Empire Ottoman de 1848 à 1914* (Centre national de la recherché scientifique, paris 1979). The impact of al-Jazāiri on the intellectual life in the Mashriq, Syria more specifically, can be found in Itzchak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya and Arabism in late Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), Chapter 6 and in David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[35] Religious notables, in particular, departed to Istanbul or the Mashriq after 1881 and became engaged in anti-French activities directed from their exile. See Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint,* 214.

the Ottoman dynasty, where they were involved in anti-colonial, anti-French propaganda. Their plea had a wide appeal among Ottomans, Mashriqis specifically, on the basis of the pan-Islamic discourse they articulated.

> The expatriates most hostile to French politics in North Africa were not content to take action individually by oral propaganda when they could expose their grievances in the press. They are rather grouped in associations or using politico-religious movements with more or less a pan-Islamic character.[36]

Increasing restrictions on movements among Maghribi countries on one hand, and between the Maghrib and the Mashriq on the other hand might have reduced the number of migrants moving between the different countries but could not prevent some from making the journey. In fact, it was often the same colonial order that was creating geographical boundaries and controlling borders that helped create Islam's political and intellectual twentieth century. Some of Aṭfiyyash's students were among those who, during and after World War I, were forced or were intimidated into leaving their countries to find refuge elsewhere. Egypt was the ideal asylum, at least for those who, like Ibrāhīm Aṭfiyyash, were allowed to choose a host country; others, such as al-Bārūnī, were not as lucky and were denied entrance to all colonial mandates or protectorates. However, wherever they ended, Ibadi reformers were easily assimilated into reform movements.[37]

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[36] Bardin, *Algériens et Tunisiens,* 230. Cleveland, as well, found pan-Islamism to be an attractive doctrine for Maghribis, a doctrine that provided an ideological base for their anti-colonial resistance. See Cleveland, *Islam against the West,* 91.

[37] Ali Merad, in his seminal study on the Salafi movement in Algeria, observed and briefly commented on the cooperation between Ibadi and Salafi reformers. See Merad, *Le réformisme musulman,* 222-225. A prominent Ibadi reformer who played a significant role in Ibn Badis' movement was Ibrāhīm Bayyūḍ (1899-1981). Bayyūḍ received a traditional Mizabi education and was the youngest member of the 'Azzaba circle. He was a pupil of the famous Ibadi scholar 'Umar bin Yaḥyā. The latter was a student of Aṭfiyyash and was known for his involvement in a pan-Islamic secret society in the Mizab, allegedly associated with Istanbul. He was persecuted by the French for his incitement against colonialism. Bin Yaḥyā established a school in 1896 in Qarara in Mizab that was later expanded by his student Bayyūḍ and became known as the institute of *al-Ḥayā,* known to be a fortress of Islamic revival in Southern Algeria. See Bābā 'Ammī et al., eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya,* 313-314. Bayyūḍ led a campaign to

As previously discussed, the Ibadi-Sunni rapprochement had been first noted in the late nineteenth century but became even more noticeable after World War I, when more Ibadi reformers were integrated into Salafi movements in both North Africa and the Middle East. For example, ibn Bādīs' Salafi movement in Algeria, advocating patriotism, Arabism, pan-Islamism and Islamic reform, provided Ibadi reformers with an official platform to integrate with Sunni reformism on one hand and with the Mashriq on the other. Commenting on the intertwining between the Mashriq and the Maghrib, as envisioned by Algerian Salafis, Cleveland has stated that

> [n]ews of the social, cultural, and political evolution of the Mashriq, with which the Algerian Muslim leadership came to equate their own renaissance, was most frequently conveyed to them through the pages of *al-Fath* and *al-Manar*. Through a desire to place themselves in the mainstream of the currents emanating from the source of their inspiration, the Algerian reformists embraced cultural Arabism and "came to salute the Mashriq as their second *patrie*".[38]

The above applied not only to Sunni reformers but to Ibadis as well. Like Sunni Salafis, they endorsed Arabism, pan-Islamism and Islamic reform. For some, the Mashriq was not only saluted as the second *patrie* but was, in fact, the second *patrie*. The career of two prominent Ibadi exiles, Aṭfiyyash and al-Bārūnī, provide a showcase for the Maghrib-Mashriq integration, and for the Ibadi diaspora's role in pulling the Ibadi world, Zanzibar included, into "the mainstream of the currents". Nothing testifies to this more than Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khatīb's acknowledgment --in celebration of *al-Fatḥ*'s twelfth anniversary in May 1937-- of that contribution and of

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abolish army conscription in the Mizab valley and was one of the founders of the AUMA in 1931. He contributed many articles in the Arab press calling for national unity and Islamic solidarity and promoting Arabic language. He was associated with the Algerian liberation movement after World War II and was the major link between Mizabi anti-colonial activists and the leadership of that movement. See Ibid., 20. Another prominent Ibadi activist with the AUMA was 'Umar al-'Anq, a student of both Aṭfiyyash and bin Yaḥyā, in addition to Abū al-Yaqẓān who was also a member of the AUMA.

[38] Cleveland, *Islam against the West,* 105.

the prominent role both Aṭfiyyash and al-Bārūnī played by joining al-Khaṭīb's efforts for reform.[39]

Aṭfiyyash, also known as Abū Isḥāq, was born in 1886 in Bani Yesgen in the Mizab valley and was tutored by his uncle Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash. After a brief career in commerce, he went back to learning circles and made his first stop in Algiers around 1910. The French exiled him to Tunisia in 1917, where he joined al-Zaytūna University. There, he supervised, along with his friends Abī al-Yaqẓān and Muḥammad al-Thamīnī, missions of Mizabi students who had been arriving at al-Zaytūna in larger numbers since 1913. In Tunisia, Aṭfiyyash and his Ibadi friends found refuge with the reform movement led by 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Tha'ālibī and became heavily involved with the activities of the Tunisian Constitutional Party. In 1923, colonial officials exiled both al-Tha'ālibī and Aṭfiyyash from Tunisia and both chose Egypt as their refuge. While Tunisia had nourished reform tendencies in Aṭfiyyash, Cairo provided him with more opportunities to cultivate those tendencies as well as the means to develop his ideology. Thus, upon arriving to Egypt in 1923 he published his treatise on Islamic reform and modernization called *al-Di'āya ilā sabīl al-mu'minīn* (The Call to the Path of Believers), in which he defended Salafism and advocated its call for reconciliation between modernism and Islam.[40] He also

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[39] *Al-Fatḥ*, July, 1937, vol. 551. *Al-Fatḥ* considered al-Bārūnī one of the most qualified leaders in the Muslim *umma* and one of its most righteous and sincere notables. Ibid., 15. In that same volume, Abū Isḥāq extolled *al-Fatḥ* as "the mouthpiece of Arabism and the Muslim *umma*, its mirror and fortress." Ibid., 19.

[40] Abī Isḥāq Ibrāhīm Aṭfiyyash, *Al-Di'āya ila sabīl al-mu'minīn* (Call to the Path of Believers) (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1923). Islamic reform should lead to improvement and this can only happen if Muslims adopt new sciences and learn languages… Unity is praised as long as it is for the sake of the *umma*. This is perhaps one of the most significant treaties published by Ibadis and that show the degree to which some high profile Ibadis were influenced by Salafism and Salafi ideology.

cultivated al-Khaṭīb's friendship and contributed articles to *al-Zahrā'* and *al-Fatḥ*.[41] His motivation, as al-Khatīb stated, had always revolved around issues of Muslim unity.[42]

Two years after his arrival in Cairo, he established the journal *al-Minhāj*, which appeared in seventeen volumes between 1925 and 1930, when he transferred its ownership to al-Khaṭīb because of financial hardship. *Al-Minhāj* was known for its strong anti-colonial tone, and for its role in bridging the Maghrib with the Mashriq by promoting Maghribi affairs and highlighting Maghribi issues for a Mashriqi audience.[43] He was a founding member of *Jam'iyyat al-hidāya al-islāmiyya* (Islamic Guidance Society) and *Jam'iyyat al-ikhwān al-muslimīn* (The Society of Muslim Brothers)[44] --two major Egyptian associations that promoted Islamic nationalism, Arabism, patriotism and Islamic reformism. He was also a close friend of Rashīd Ridā of *al-Manār*, of Ḥasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brothers, and of Sayyid Qutb, the influential and controversial ideologue of the *ikhwān* movement.[45] He was appointed as an editor at the National Library in Cairo, a job that provided him with the opportunity to edit a number of his uncle's books and two of al-Sālimī's major

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[41] His contributions to *al-Zahrā'* included articles on Arab civilization and heritage, the difference between Ibadis and Kharijites, and a series entitled "pages from the history of Ibadism". See *al-Zahrā'*, vol. I, 1924/25 and vol. II, 1925/26. His contributions to *al-Fatḥ* included a series of articles on the history of the relationship between the Berbers and Islam in North Africa. See *al-Fatḥ*, vols., 648-650, 1939.

[42] Cited in Muḥammad Nāṣir, *Al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Aṭfiyyash fī jihādihi al-islāmī*, 5.

[43] Nāṣir, *Al-Shaykh Ibrahīm Aṭfiyyash*, 128.

[44] Aṭfiyyash's son Muḥammad was an active member of the Muslim Brothers Association and was imprisoned in 1949, when the Egyptian government cracked down on the movement. Ibid., 58.

[45] Perhaps it is this close relationship between Qutb and Aṭfiyyash that prompted the former to write an article about the *khawārij* in *al-Shihāb* – the Muslim Brothers newspaper, pointing to the fact that Ibadis refuse to be called *khawārij*. He mentioned Ibrāhīm Aṭfiyyash as one of the most esteemed Ibadi scholars. See Ibid., 52-53.

works,[46] further contributing to the dissemination of Ibadi literature. He was chosen by the Omani Imām Ghālib bin 'Alī in the 1950s to represent Oman at the Arab League and the United Nations. Aṭfiyyash visited Zanzibar in 1947 and again in the early 1960s and was married to a Zanzibari lady of Omani origin. He was also invited to tutor at the Islamic academy established there in 1943 but he turned the invitation down because it was extended to him by the British.[47] He died on December 13, 1965. Aṭfiyyash maintained correspondence with a number of Omanis in Zanzibar, including *al-Falaq*'s editor, al-Maskarī, and *al-Falaq* used to inform its readers about Aṭfiyyash's works and ask for them to be circulated among its readers.[48]

Al-Bārūnī played a similar role and had an even more direct influence over the affairs of Omanis in Zanzibar. Like Aṭfiyyash, he was a 'global' figure, crosscutting Salafism and Ibadism, bridging Oman, Zanzibar, the Maghrib and the Mashriq, and was associated with individuals and movements fostering the ideology of pan-Arab/Islamism and Islamic reform. Al-Bārūnī was born in 1870/1 in Jado in Nafusa mountains in modern day Libya and was educated by his father, who was an *'ālim* and a poet and who had cultivated a good relationship with Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash. In 1887-88 al-Bārūnī went to al-Zaytūna Mosque in Tunisia, where he was tutored, like Aṭfiyyash, by 'Uthmān al-Makkī and Muḥammad al-Nakhlī, known for their reform tendencies and association with the early Salafī movement in Tunisia.[49] In 1893-94,

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[46] Al-Sālimī's two works edited by Aṭfiyyash were *Jawhar al-niẓām* and *Tuḥfat al-a'yān*. The most significant work of Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash edited by his nephew was *Jāmi' al-aṣl wa al-fir' fi al-fiqh*.
[47] Nāṣir. *Al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Aṭfiyyash*, 31.
[48] See al-Kindī, *Al-Ṣaḥafa al-'umāniyya*. For example, Abū Isḥāq had sent a copy of his treatise entitled *al-ṣawm bi al-tilifūn wa al-tiligrāf* (Fasting According to Telephone and Telegraph) to Sālim al-Rawāḥī in Zanzibar and *al-Falaq* asked for Aṭfiyyash's opinion on the subject to be widely disseminated among Zanzibaris and to be published on its pages. See *al-Falaq*, February 12, 1938, 3.
[49] Arnold H. Green, *The Tunisian Ulama 1873-1915: Social Structure and Response to Ideological Currents* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 62.

al-Bārūnī went to al-Azhar, where he spent three years before he returned to Tunisia,[50] then to Mizab to join Muḥammad Aṭfiyyash for three years.[51] Clearly, al-Bārūnī's education in Tunisia, Egypt and the Mizab, among Sunni and Ibadi scholars, provided him with a universal approach and a cross-*madhāhib* education that predisposed him for a prominent role in pan-Islamic and reform movements. It is this background that prompted his life long friend Abū al-Yaqẓān to describe him as having

> big pride in Islamic nationalism, a judgment in the general interests of Muslims, great passion for Islamic unity regardless of ethnicities, and moderation in terms of modern Islamic revival. He supports it [Islamic revival] and hopes for it but only within the parameters of righteous Islam --no inflexibility and no unbelief, no extremism and no neglect.[52]

But it was not his education alone that had broadened and shaped his mind. His political career played an equally significant role, a career he started as a member of the Council of Deputies in Istanbul (1908-1911), then a *mujāhid* during the Italian invasion in 1911, to be followed by his membership in the Ottoman Parliament in Istanbul between 1913 and 1916. Later, he returned to Tripolitania on October 8, 1916 with a decree from the Ottoman Sultan appointing him as the governor of Tripolitania. He achieved notable results during his governship and he is considered one of the founders of the first independent Republic in the Arab world between 1918 and 1920.[53]

He was accused of conspiracy in 1898 against 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, an allegation he repeatedly denied, and was arrested by the Ottoman authorities but was released

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50 He was to visit Tunisia secretly later in September 1923 where he met his friend and biographer Abī al-Yaqzān. When the French discovered he was there he ordered him to leave to Marseilles on the first available ship. Ibrāhīm, *Sulaymān al-Bārūnī bāsha*, 56.

51 He paid another visit to the Mizab later as well in 1907, when he returned to see his mentor *Aṭfiyyash* and again in 1914, to pay his condolences for Aṭfiyyash's family.

52 Ibrāhīm, *Sulaymān al-Bārūnī*, 50.

53 Ali Abdullatif Ahmida, *The Making of Modern Libya: state formation, colonization and resistance, 1830-1932* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 117-124.

shortly. There is no doubt in al-Bārūnī's allegiance to the Ottoman dynasty or to its pan-Islamic policy but he might have been critical, like a number of Muslim reformers were, of 'Abd al-Hamīd's despotic nature and of his advisory team staffed by conservative Sufis hostile to Salafi reformers.[54] However, he praised 'Abd al-Hamīd for his drive to modernize and to improve communications among Muslims, to build schools and mosques, for his pan-Islamic policy, and for his resolve against European powers and against "treaties aimed at subjugating the dynasty."[55] Along with 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, he praised the Egyptian Khedive 'Abbās Ḥilmī[56] and Muṣṭafa Kāmil, emphasizing their anti-colonial attitude and the latter's contribution to the *nahḍa* in the East.[57]

His early years in Cairo provided him, like it provided many émigrés and residents, with the opportunity to own a printing press, al-Barūniyya Press, which he used to publish Ibadi texts and to produce his own newspaper called *al-Asad al-Islāmī*. *Al-Asad* was known for its pan-Islamic and anti-colonial tone and reached Ibadi

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[54] Although al-Bārūnī wrote a number of poems in praise of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, it is in his brief commentary on the restoration of the Ottoman constitution in 1908 – an event he whole-heartedly supported and even celebrated -- that one feels the bitterness al-Bārūnī had toward 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's era in terms of the persecution of some reformers, favoritism and lack of freedom of speech. See al-Bārūnī, Sulaymān al-Bārūnī, *Dīwān al-Bārūnī*, Vol. 2 (Cairo: al-Azhār al-Bārūniyya, 1908), 21-32. Al-Bārūnī much rejoiced the weakening of the conservatives around 'Abd al-Hamīd, especially the notorious Aleppine 'Ālim and Sufi leader Abū al-Huda al-Ṣayyādī. See Ibid., 21-24. He held much contempt toward Sufis who, in his opinion, understood Islam in terms of tombs, talismans, drums, dance and laziness. Ibid., Vol.1, 59-61. For more information on al-Sayyādi, see Butrus Abu Manneh, "Sultan 'Abdulhamid II and Shaikh al-Sayyadi," *Middle Eastern Studies* 15(1979): 133-153. For more details on conservative Sufis' alliance with 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, see Amal Ghazal, "Sufism, *Ijtihād* and Modernity: Yūsuf al-Nabhānī in the Age of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 19(2001): 239-272.

[55] Al-Bārūnī, *Dīwān*. Vol. 2, 14.

[56] Ibid., 36-7.

[57] Ibid., 40-42. Al-Bārūnī wrote two eulogies for Kāmil, lamenting the death of a great orator, a fighter for his country and religion and a leader of a nation. Ibid., 69-72.

communities in Zanzibar, Oman and the Mizab.[58] It appeared in 1906 in three issues before it was shut down by the British.

When Tripolitania was occupied by Italian troops again in 1922, al-Bārūnī left and was later denied entry to it and to all other occupied Arab countries. He spent two years in exile in France. He went to Mecca in August 1924, where he was received by Sharīf Ḥusayn.[59] The latter intervened with the British on his behalf to grant him permission to go to Oman, where he worked as an official advisor for Imām al-Khalīlī for two years. He remained there, traveling to Iraq very often, where his family was relocated. He died in 1940.[60]

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[58] Ibid., 113.

[59] Sherif Ḥusayn was very welcoming of al-Bārūnī although the latter was openly critical of Ḥusayn's collaboration with the British against the Ottomans in the revolt of 1916. He refused to pay allegiance to Ḥusayn as the Caliph. Nevertheless, Sheriff Ḥusayn honored him with the Hashemite Independence C.der. Ibrāhīm. *Sulaymān al-Bārūnī*, 167, 205-208.

[60] Al-Bārūnī's career was strikingly similar to that of Shakīb Arslān in some regards. Both were born to notable families, fought the Italian invasion of Libya -- each in his own way--, were elected to the Ottoman Parliament in 1913, defended the Ottoman order during the First World War, and were denied entry by the French and the British, and by the Italians in the case of al-Barūnī, to countries under their mandate. Both spent their careers in exile campaigning for Islamic unity and Islamic reform, battling colonialism and bridging the Maghrib and the Mashriq. Al-Bārūnī's influence among Ibadis, reformist Ibadis in particular, was similar to the one Arslān had among Sunni reformers. In any case, he is described as another *mujāhid* and Cleveland's words about Arslān --that "[i]ndependence was his objective in dealing with Europeans, the reconstruction of a true Islamic society in confronting his fellow Muslims," -- hold true for al-Bārūnī as well. Cleveland, *Islam against the West*, 161-2. Al-Bārūnī, however, did not acquire the notorious reputation of Arslān, especially in the latter's compromise with the Italians, and did not generate the controversy Arslān did. In fact, al-Bārūnī often clashed with Arslān, especially when the latter suggested that Arab unity could be confined, temporarily, to the Mashriq at the exclusion of the Maghrib. Arslān's suggestion appeared in his speech at the Arab Club in Damascus delivered in 1936 and generated much criticism from Maghribis, especially Libyans who, as Cleveland has noted, felt that "Arslan had abandoned his anti-imperial campaign in exchange for Italian gold." Idem, *Islam against the West*, 128. Al-Bārūnī's reply to Arslān was published in *al-Rābiṭa al-ʿarabiyya* and reprinted in the Mizabi newspaper *al-Umma*. In one of the letters sent by al-Bārūnī to Abī al-Yaqzān, he stated that only Islamic union, and not Arab union, could be applied to the Maghrib whose Turks, Berbers, Sudanese and others could be united by Islam only. Al-Bārūnī seemed to have received many letters of support for his criticism of Arslān, one of them dated October 1937 that suggested it was al-Bārūnī, and not Arslān, who should have been nominated to the presidency of the Arab Academy of Damascus since "he is the most apt to strengthen the bonds among Islamic countries, unlike the one who is deceiving people in the name of the nation and religion..." See Ibrāhīm, *Sulaymān al-Bārūnī*, vol. 2, 196-197. This, however, was not the first incident that had caused controversy between Arslān and al-Bārūnī. Earlier in 1933, Arslān, in his eulogy for Aḥmad al-Sanūsī, seemed to have exaggerated the role of Sanusis in the Libyan-Italian war by downplaying the role of Tripolitanians and Ottomans and by completely ignoring al-Bārūnī's role in

Al-Bārūnī's arrival in Oman was a very significant event for Ibadis and was celebrated in Oman, Zanzibar and the Mizab, in evidence of his own prestige and of the oneness of that world.[61] He was greeted as both a hero of anti-colonialism and a victim of colonialism, and as a much needed reformer who would change the fate of Oman. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to assess the degree to which he was able to introduce significant changes in Oman, he did sow seeds of modernization and reform and provided the Imamate with a more international outlook, despite the opposition he faced from among conservative Imamites that resulted in his resignation as the Imām's advisor.[62] Abū al-Yaqẓān has commented that "had not it been for his sickness and pain, he would have made out of coastal Oman and the Interior one united country among the greatest of Islamic countries in the East as it was in the eleventh *hijri* century," and that "he intended to reform and modernize all administrative units to make the Imamate in Oman compete wit developed and modern nations."[63] This might have been an exaggeration but at least it was an indication of what role Ibadis expected from him and from Oman.

From there, he corresponded frequently with Zanzibar. One of his main correspondents was al-Maskarī,[64] to whom al-Bārūnī acted as an informant on Omani

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that war. Al-Bārūnī refuted Arslān's statements accusing him of falsifying historical facts and of showing ingratitude towards the Ottomans and the Ottoman Caliph. See Ibid.,190-195. Their disagreement or rather animosity required the intervention of Ibrāhīm Bayyūḍ to intermediate between the two. Ibid., 192.

[61] There is a poem cited in Abī al-Yaqẓān's biography of al-Bārūnī and written by an Omani in Zanzibar commemorating the arrival of al-Bārūnī to Oman. It was in response to Abī al-Yaqẓān's congratulatory letter sent from the Mizab to Oman and circulated in Zanzibar. Ibid., vol. 1, 245-249.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibrāhīm. *Sulaymān al-Bārūnī*, 44.

[64] For example, al-Maskarī had sent al-Bārūnī a letter on 23 December 1928 apparently informing him about launching *al-Falaq* and al-Bārūnī replied on 13 February 1929 congratulating Arabs on that step and praising their efforts to resurrect "the glory of Arabs in Zanzibar". Al-Maskarī's private documents. Obviously, al-Bārūnī was in frequent touch with al-Maskarī as he corresponded with him even when he was in Baghdad, where he used to go for treatment for the malaria.

affairs as well as a consultant and an advisor on matters related to Arabs and the Arab Association in Zanzibar. For example, on June 2, 1931, al-Bārūnī wrote in response to al-Maskarī's request for his advice on a disagreement among the executive members of the Association that resulted in the temporal resignation of al-Maskarī, then secretary of the Association and editor of *al-Falaq*, and of other members. The reason behind the disagreement was al-Maskarī's demand that members of the Association should not attend the British Resident's *barza* that took place during Islamic holidays, that they should rather demand the abolition of such *barza*, and that such formalities should be undertaken by the Sultan alone. Al-Maskarī, as he explained to al-Bārūnī in another letter, was also drawing the Association's attention to a number of rights for Arabs that he saw neglected and ignored by the government. When al-Maskarī and the president of the Association decided to secretly ask for the abolition of the *barza*, some members described by al-Maskarī as having "old ideas and personal interests" objected and told the Sultan who was infuriated by the decision. Al-Maskarī and the president decided to separate and form their own party called the Party of the Free, with the aim of defending the rights of Arabs. After much deliberation and intervention, the idea was abandoned and al-Maskarī decided to relinquish his duty as an editor for *al-Falaq* and keep his position in the Association to avoid associating the anti-British criticism on the pages of *al-Falaq* with the Association. Al-Maskarī, however, assured al-Bārūnī that he would remain an advisor for *al-Falaq*'s editorial. Al-Bārūnī's advice, which comforted Hāshil and conformed with his own view, was that attending the *barza* of the British Resident was not the business of the Association but rather that of the Sultan himself since he was the one with the official status.[65]

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[65] Al-Maskarī' s private documents and listed in al-Kindī, *Al-Ṣaḥāfa al-'umāniyya*, 193.

Al-Maskarī often shared thoughts and suggestions with al-Bārūnī[66] and urged Imām al-Khalīlī in Oman to follow the advice and recommendations of al-Bārūnī.[67] Al-Maskarī, born in Ibra, Oman in 1895 and orphaned at the age of ten was brought to Zanzibar where he was raised by his uncle and cousins and educated in one of Zanzibar's Quranic schools. He joined the executive body of the Arab Association in 1926 and was *al-Falaq's* editor for a total of eleven years.[68] He represented the post-World War I generation of Omanis in Zanzibar whose web of connections and ties of identity kept them at a close proximity to political and intellectual currents in the Arab world. Journalism provided them with an efficient means to invest in those connections and elaborate on those ties. Moreover, their contacts and links with international figures such as Aṭfiyyash and al-Bārūnī maintained their position at the center of the Arab world's intellectual life, of pan-Ibadism, pan-Islamism and Islamic reformism and armed them with a global anti-colonial ideology.

Education, Identity and *waṭan*

One of the primary concerns continuously raised by *al-Falaq* was the ineffectiveness of the government educational system. It was accused of failing to provide Arabs as well as Swahilis -- the latter often referred to in *al-Falaq* as *al-ahālī* --[69] with a good education, let alone good jobs, and of having a destructive impact on the identity of Arabs and that of the island. Below is a discussion of how Omanis

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66 For example, Hāshil advised al-Bārūnī to establish a consultation body for the Imām in order to offer him advice and report on matters of interest. Hāshil also recommended that the Imām in Oman should use a fist of iron against those causing discord among Omanis and damaging the reputation of 'free Oman'. He ended his letter stating that Oman was a truly free country and that it was paying the price for this freedom. Ibid.

67 Al-Maskarī's private documents.

68 See al-Kindī, *Al-Saḥāfa al-'umāniyya*, 71-79.

69 *Al-ahālī* is the plural form of *ahl*. The term can acquire several meanings but the closest in this context is the natives or the native population.

evaluated the public education and how they related the education offered in twentieth century Zanzibar to British policies understood by Omanis to undermine the role of Arabs on the island, disfigure their Arab-Muslim identity and uproot the Arab-Islamic heritage of Zanzibar. The Omani elite sought to preserve that identity and that heritage by stressing the need for a vigorous curriculum that promoted Arabic and taught Islam and Islamic history. Those, they believed, were their demands and the demands of the Swahili community, with whom Omanis shared a *waṭan*. That *waṭan* was defined by the Islamic religion and the Arabic language, the latter being integral to the religion that both Arabs and non-Arabs on the island shared. This analysis is then followed by a re-evaluation of the meaning of 'Zanzibari identity' and 'Zanzibari nationalism' as they have been interpreted by the scholarship on Zanzibar.

Unlike the Indian community that had its own schooling system in Zanzibar, Arabs and Swahilis were the target audience of the government education system. Zanzibar's educational system was first introduced by 'Alī in an attempt to modernize and improve education in Zanzibar. He asked the Egyptian government to send three teachers to Zanzibar and the first arrived in 1905. Two years later, the British decided to create a Department of Education and supervise the educational system themselves. It was a system shaped, to a great extent, by British policies continuously sharpening racial and ethnic divides inside the Protectorate. Beside the fact that the interwar period continued to witness the downward spiraling of the Arab elite's economic fortunes, and an increasing indebtedness to Indian moneylenders, Arabs (as well as Swahilis) were not well-represented in the several Departments in the Protectorate due to a lack of appropriate education that could have prepared them for the task.

This was revealed in a study commissioned in 1920 to know "what immediate steps can be taken to ensure that Arabs and Africans (preferably his Highness' subjects) shall have equal opportunities with Goans and Indians for employment in Government Departments."[70] The commission had no Arab or African representatives and the recommendations were drafted without consultation with either of the groups. The recommendations further sharpened the social and ethnic stratification by stating that "the goal of educational effort for each of the nationalities should be for the Arab agriculture, for the Indian commerce, and for the African industries."[71] However, the commissioners concluded that Arab youths showed little interest in agricultural careers and as a result, "no agricultural training schemes should be inaugurated unless there were 'a complete transformation' in the Arab attitude."[72] The British defined the nature of education and of jobs to be pursued according to ethnic backgrounds and according to 'attitudes' as they themselves classified them. However, Arab 'attitude', as shown below, was, once again, in sharp contrast with the one perceived and projected by the British.

In 1927, state education for girls was initiated to accommodate Arab girls,[73] and then in 1930, African girls were allowed to enroll but in a separate class. When Arab parents asked that their daughters be enrolled with the African pupils rather than waiting for next year's openings in the Arab class, the principal refused stating that "[t]hose who know the depth of local prejudices will appreciate the significance of this

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[70] Bennett, *A History of the Arab State*, 223.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., 224.
[73] There were already 700 Indian girls enrolled in the Indian schools when public schools opened their doors to accommodate female students.

fact."[74] As Bennett commented, "The true significance may have been that the local prejudice was more in the British mind than in the Arab."[75]

The public school system, however, failed to attract a large number of students, both Arab and Swahili, who were still attending Quranic schools in larger numbers.[76] On the one hand, Quranic schools were ubiquitous and on the other, they provided what still mattered to many Muslim Zanzibaris the most regardless of ethnicity: religious education and knowledge of the Arabic language. Although they were underfunded, receiving no government subsidy, and were run by poorly paid teachers, Quranic schools remained in the eyes of many on the island a better option than the colonial system. Constant complaints by both Arabs and Swahilis about the exclusion of Islam as a subject of study in the governmental school curriculum and the complete marginalization of Arabic in terms of language training fell on deaf ears. The public school subjects were taught in Swahili but at the beginning of the twentieth century, the British changed the script of the Swahili language from Arabic to Roman, further alienating Muslims and enraging the Arab community. English was taught as a subsidiary language during the four primary schooling years and Arabic was, like English, a subject of study and not a language of instruction and was taught during the eighth and last session of the day.[77] Quranic schools remained a strong competitor to government schools until as late as the 1940s.

Muḥsin al-Barwānī, a graduate of the schooling system in the 1930s, provided in his memoirs insights into what --in the eyes of an Arab -- that system offered and

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[74] Bennett, *A History of the Arab State*, 227.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Until 1939, schools had been constantly closed down. Twenty three district schools had been opened by 1920 and twelve of them had been closed by 1939. Ibid., 233.
[77] Ibid., 51.

what it did not. Like many of his generation, al-Barwānī first attended a Quranic school, and in a typical fashion, his schooling came to an end when the teacher decided it was far more profitable for him "to pick up cloves than to teach tiny "tots" to recite the Qur'an for a rupee a month each."[78] Al-Barwānī's parents decided to move him to the governmental system, which consisted of four primary and four elementary years. Little good Arabic was gained there, and as al-Barwānī has mentioned, "[a]lthough we made good progress in English our Arabic was erratic, in spite of our having erudite scholars to teach us. The snag was that there was no consistent series for the teaching of Arabic, and there was no systematic continuity as there was in English."[79]

There was one high school run by missionaries until 1935, when the government finally granted Zanzibaris their request to have a public high school. Again, Arab demands to include Arabic in its curriculum were opposed by the British on the basis that most pupils spoke Swahili. Zanzibar also lacked a higher education institute despite the need and the calls to erect one; those wanting to pursue that education had to seek it somewhere else. A common destination for Omanis who could afford the expense was Egypt.[80] It is not clear how many went to Egypt but it is known that Sultan 'Alī's inauguration of a modern education system was partly in response to a local demand for better educational opportunities. The fact that the

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[78] al-Barwani, *Conflicts and Harmony*, 49.

[79] Ibid., 50. Although Arabic was in retreat in Zanzibar and a number of Arab youth were losing fluency if not knowledge of the language, many retained literacy and fluency in it. On one hand, Quranic schools, private tutors and more significantly, continuous interaction with Oman and Egypt provided exposure to and knowledge in Arabic. On the other hand, Zanzibar had seven libraries and reading rooms, and at least four of them housed books in Arabic: the Arab library, the Sunni Library, the Comorian Library and the Book Club. Ibid.

[80] Oman was not a destination for formal education. Until then, the only education available was a pure religious one. It is only with the arrival of al-Bārūnī in 1924 that efforts were made to build a modern school at Samā 'il valley.

Egyptian government accepted the Zanzibari primary school certificate as a qualification for entrance into its secondary schools must have been a step to accommodate students coming from Zanzibar not only at the university level but at the secondary one as well. Although al-Barwānī, for example, went to Makerere in Uganda for his university education, his father's wish to send him to Cairo was perhaps more indicative of the general trend and desire among Omanis.[81] Arabs also had a mutual aid society called 'ANTS' apparently funding top students to go to al-Azhar University in particular.[82]

However, Egypt was appealing for another reason. As al-Barwānī's relative Muḥammad Sālim told him, "[t]here you will imbibe patriotism and the anti-colonial struggle. What we want you to do after qualifying is to come back here and help spread patriotic sentiments among the people."[83] Thus, in addition to education, Egypt taught anti-colonialism and patriotism. Memories of Egyptian icons of anti-colonialism and patriotism lived long in Zanzibar and were cherished by many Arabs. One of those icons was Muṣṭafa Kāmil (1874-1908)[84], the leader of the National Party, whose anti-colonial struggle was relayed to al-Barwānī through stories recounted by his uncle and by a Shaykh called 'Abd Allah al-Ḥadramī. Shaykh 'Abd Allah used to

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[81] The continuous flow of Arabs from Zanzibar to Cairo for education was perhaps the motivation behind having Radio Cairo broadcasting in Swahili in the 1950s to cater to the large Arab Zanzibari community. See al-Barwani, *Conflicts and Harmony,* 99.

[82] Ibid., 65.

[83] Ibid.

[84] A lawyer, he was one of turn-of-the-century-Egypt's most prominent politicians and journalists. His popularity was based on his anti-British views and his call for the immediate end of the British occupation. He founded the anti-British newspaper *al-Liwā'* and the Nationalist Party and was particularly popular among the student class. His political thought was a blend of Egyptian patriotism and Islamic solidarity and he remained, first and foremost, an icon of national struggle against colonialism. Qasim Amin's comment on Kāmil's funeral best reflected the powerful symbol he was. "Twice only, wrote Qasim Amin, had he felt the heart of Egypt beating –at Dinshway and when Mustafa Kamil was buried." See Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* 202. See also, for instance, Israel Gershoni and James J. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs: the Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

recount stories in his classes "about the nationalist movements of India, of Turkey, of Syria, of Egypt, of Morocco, of Sudan, everywhere."[85] Later on, he was to warn Muḥsin al-Barwānī against going to the British Resident alone because "Mustafa Kamil was poisoned as he was drinking tea with the British representative in Egypt."[86] Sa'd Zaghlūl, leader of the Wafd Party and the first elected prime minister of Egypt,[87] and whose picture was also found in al-Barwāni's uncle's room alongside those of Muḥammad 'Abduh and al-Afghānī, seemed to have enjoyed similar popularity in Zanzibar.

Both Kāmil and Zaghlūl were considered anti-colonial heroes and stories about their activities and achievements were not only relayed through teachers and relatives or through the press but were witnessed by that first generation of Zanzibari Arabs who were attending Egyptian educational institutions. One of those who personally related to Zaghlūl and his independence movement was Nāsir al-Lamkī's son Muḥammad. He left for Egypt in 1913 to pursue his high school and undergraduate

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[85] Ibid, 64.

[86] Ibid. Al-Barwānī stated in his book that it was not a coincidence that the Zanzibari Nationalist Party was called as such, in reference to the National Party of Mustafa Kāmil. In the interview, al-Barwāni confirmed that the term *al-Ḥizb al-waṭanī* for the ZNP was borrowed from Kāmil's *Ḥizb*. 'Alī Muḥsin al-Barwānī. Interview. Muscat, March, 2002.

[87] Zaghlūl (d. 1927) was educated in al-Azhar and then at the French Law School in Cairo and became known as an effective administrator and reformer. He was appointed Minister of Education in 1906 and Minister of Justice in 1910. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1913 and established himself as leader of the opposition to the government, and by association, to the British. His role gained prominence when a delegation *wafd* of seven prominent Egyptians, including Zaghlūl, was denied by the British a request to represent Egypt at the Paris Peace Conference to represent Egypt's desire for independence. The *wafd* then toured the country in early 1919 rallying popular support. His ability to communicate well and deliver speeches captured the attention of Egyptians who granted him some kind of popular adulation. He, along with three other members of the delegation, was arrested by the British in March 1919 and exiled to Malta. The Egyptian street reacted with demonstrations and riots demanding independence. British use of force to quell the demonstrations led to an upheaval that became known as the 1919 revolution. The British finally conceded and allowed Zaghlul and his delegation to go to Paris. In 1922, Britain unilaterally proclaimed Egypt's independence, or rather semi-independence. For more information, see Vatikiotis, *A Modern History of Egypt*, M. W. Daly, "the British Occupation, 1882-1922," *The Cambridge History of Egypt: V.2 modern Egypt, from 1517 to the end of the twentieth century*, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

education and got involved with the Egyptian independence movement. He seems to have participated in the events of 1919, resulting in his imprisonment.[88] This prompted his grandfather Sulaymān to bring him back to Zanzibar in 1920, one year after the Egyptian revolution and before he completed his studies.[89] The revolutionary mood that characterized the period stamped Muḥammad al-Lamkī's political career and was reflected in his articles written in *al-Falaq*. After all, it is such encounters with other Muslims and other Arabs that had preserved the global dimensions of the Omani elite's identity. It is this association with far away events, places, and names that kept the elite susceptible to 'international thinking' and embedded in the process of intellectual connectedness and exchange. Writing under pseudonyms of Aflāṭūn (Plato), Abū Hurayra (a name of one of the most esteemed *hadīth* narrators) and Abu al-Barakāt, al-Lamkī was very critical of the British and of their policies in Zanzibar and the Arab world. He called for reform and progress inside the Arab community and the Zanzibari society and deeply cherished Arab unity.

The state of public education in Zanzibar galvanized a strong anti-British tone on the pages of *al-Falaq*. The articles in *al-Falaq* reflected the Arab 'attitude' toward education as manifested by Arabs themselves, mainly Omanis, and as recorded by their pens. In one of the articles published in April 1938, entitled 'Ingratitude', the editor first explained that by ingratitude he meant treason by "Arabs who are the tail of

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[88] In an article written in *al-Falaq*, Muḥammad al-Lamkī mentioned the Egyptian revolution in 1919 and described the blood that was spilled on him during the events. *Al-Falaq*, June 25, 1938.
[89] Interview with Sa'īd al-Riyāmī, Muscat, March 2002.

colonialism" and "who harm the Arab nation."[90] Those traitors were Arabs who worked for the Department of Education in Zanzibar that is

> headed by a foreign colonizer aided by a number of his fellow citizens, following a plan of pure colonization and enslavement... It is a department that chases the Arabic language, persecutes and uproots it while it is the language of the master of this country, that of the victors who converted this land, the language of thirty one thousand Arabs: This ministry is working hard to raise the Arab youth to be *zanji* in their language and mindset, enslaved by ignorance of their language and its incentives for renaissance, for self-pride and pride in the glory of the ancestors. By not knowing their language and by lacking national pride they are behind in terms of the renaissance among their kin in other countries. By not knowing the language of the Qur'an, the Muhammadan *sunna* and the Islamic Shari'a, they have moved away from their religion, its merits and its virtues. It is a department that has not provided us in thirty years with one lawyer, medical doctor or engineer or any other specialty that this country needs for its material and moral advancement, not an accountant or even a chief clerk. Perhaps there are also things we don't know about. So, can a fair foreigner, let alone an Arab, say that it [Department of Education] is good for Arabs?[91]

The traitor, the editor continued, was the one who praised the educational system and was satisfied with the low number of Arabs in minor jobs. That 'traitor', he added, deemed "national Islamic education, knowledge of Arabic, strong ethics, broad knowledge and technical skills insignificant as long as Arabs are clerks and employees with poor salaries, supervised by Indians in governmental jobs."[92]

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90 *Al-Falaq*, April 9, 1938: 1. This article was preceded by another one under the same title outlining past glories of Arabs followed by defeat by Europeans. The most serious threat to the Arab nation, however, the article continued, was posed by Arabs who liked what the enemies were doing in terms of harming and enslaving Arabs, who encouraged Arabs to accept it, and who opposed anyone who tried to awaken and warn Arabs against the dangers of their enemies. See *al-Falaq*, April 26, 1938: 1. Thus, in the next issue, the editor was more specific about where those 'traitors' were and what their treason was exactly about.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid., 4. Indians were seen by Arabs as their main competitors as their opportunities for a better education in Zanzibar far exceeded those available for others. The Euan Smith School, a private Indian school subsidized by the British, attracted 248 Indian students. According to Bennett, 14% of total educational expenses went to the Indian community at a time when Indians were only 6.6% of the total population. See Bennett, *A History of the Arab State*, 225.

The author believed, as did other Arabs, that the purpose of education should have been to reinforce the Arab-Islamic identity of Zanzibar and to maintain and promote its position as a member of the Arab-Islamic world. However, the purpose of the educational system as designed and perpetuated by the British was believed to be doing the opposite. Good jobs and specializations were needed by Arabs but what was needed more was a solid education in Arabic as well as in Islam. It was feared that the absence of such education would ultimately result in the disfigurement and distortion of the identity of Arabs by turning them into *zunūj*. The term *zunūj*, usually translated as 'Blacks', appeared in *al-Falaq* as a derogatory term to designate, generally speaking, 'non-Muslim' and 'non-Arab/ized' Black Africans. Losing Arabic would result in losing religion and losing both would dismember Arabs and Zanzibar from their main body, their original Arab and Islamic *umma*.

Another article dealing with this issue where "our life and death lie" expressed similar concerns about the attempt of the government to use education in order to change the identity of both Arabs and Swahilis. "The *umma*," the author said, "cannot stand to watch individuals wanting its *taznīj* [making it into *zunūj*]. The *umma* sees in the policy of those individuals the death to its national life."[93] He observed that the same educational system adopted in mainland East Africa was implemented in Zanzibar and asked the following: "Fine! Now what is our relationship with that country? Is it because we are neighbors? Or is it because we are owned by the same government?"[94] The answer was obvious. The two were different; Zanzibar was Arab and Muslim; The mainland was not. Thus, he reminded his audience that

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[93] *Al-Falaq*, December 31, 1938: 2.
[94] Ibid.

> Arabs have a prominent character in this country and it is difficult to destroy their influence. Moreover, Arabs, as a Muslim nation and as the first Muslim nation, should be a role model for other Muslim nations who look upon them as being their ideal role model. Arabs, as a nation with a glorious history, cannot allow themselves to commit a literary suicide or be killed by any other individuals whoever they are."[95]

The purpose of the educational system as it existed, he continued, was known to all. While Arabs realized that not earning an education was a death sentence, they nevertheless believed that "they would rather die ignorant but with honor than die losing their nationality, history and language as a result of this education."[96] The *umma* he was referring to did not include Arabs only but also Swahilis whom he described as "an essential organ of the Arab body". Swahilis had understood the reality of the educational system, he continued, and they had concurred with Arabs that the best interest would be for the government "to improve education in Zanzibar, to place the Arabic language ahead of other languages, place the Islamic religion ahead of any other topics and place the glorious history of Arabs ahead of any other history."[97] Swahilis, thus, were not in the category of the *zunūj*. They rather belonged to the *umma*, whether the term *umma* was used to denote Zanzibar or a much broader entity. The current educational system, however, would eventually turn them into *zunūj* if they lost their religion and the little Arabic they knew. Zanzibar, with its Arab and Swahili members, could only be saved by giving high prominence and first priority to Islam, Arabic and Arab history.

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[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid. In another volume of *al-Falaq*, the editor complained about the inclusion of European history in the school curriculum and not Arab history. This perhaps prompted *al-Falaq* to include on its pages starting December 24, 1938, a series of articles under the title *safḥa majīda* (A Glorious Page), in which the editors described the adventures ðf Tippu Tip in Central Africa. His adventures were depicted as part of the history of Arab victories in Central Africa.

The concern over Arabic and Arab identity was relayed to outside Arabs who visited the island and to whom the declining status of Arabic sounded alarms. 'Adnān al-Kīlānī, editor of the pan-Arab Damascene periodical *al-Jazīra*, visited Zanzibar in May 1938 and published an article in *al-Falaq* entitled "The Duty of Arabs in this Land", in which he recorded his observations about the status of Arabic on the island and what steps should be taken to improve it. After expressing his delight to see "Arab spirit and Islamic traditions reigning in this land," he expressed his deep sadness to learn that

> the language of the Quran, the language of the people of Paradise, has not been taken care of on this island and among its youth who claim Arabism and pride themselves in it while most of them do not converse well in it. How can a person belong to a nationality without speaking its language well? How can he, in this time, the time of nationalisms, belong to Arabism while he can only speak a barbaric *zanji* language that has no relation or link to Arabism and prefers over it [Arabic] a foreign language that is trying to overcome it for political purposes…!"[98]

The blame, he continued, fell upon "the fathers who should have rather Arabized the *zunūj* of this island and dissolved them in Arabism rather than allow the poor *zanjiyya* [in reference to Swahili language] to overcome the artistic and glorious Arabic…"[99] He reiterated the importance of Arabic and reminded his readers that Arabic defined both their identity and religion. "I call upon my young brothers," he wrote, "to carry on this sacred renaissance, the renaissance of the language, the gate to national glory and the way to strengthen true Islam."[100] Al-Kīlānī outlined a program for Arabs in Zanzibar that would promote the Arabic language and help revive it. His

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[98] Al-*Falaq*, May 28, 1938: 2.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

recommendations included sending students to Egypt, Syria and Iraq,[101] especially to al-Azhar or to Arab-Islamic academies in Damascus and Beirut. There, he added, they would learn "correct religion and pure nationalism."[102] If Arabs on the island were to follow his advice and open schools dedicated to the instruction of Arabic, he would pledge "to convince a large team of educated Damascenes to come and help with your national projects and encourage them to come here, at your expense, to serve Arabism and Islam and spread their cultures until your student missions come back and take over."[103]

Al-Kīlānī's opinion of the Swahili language as a barbaric one might not have been candidly shared by all Arabs in Zanzibar as most of them spoke Swahili but his view that it did not allow Arabs to relate to Arabism and that it did not define their Arab nationality must have resonated with their beliefs. They also shared with him the concern that lack of knowledge in Arabic would not yield a proper understanding of Islam. Like him, Arabs in Zanzibar believed that the road to salvation cut through the Arab world whose renaissance should be cultivated and with whom ties should be strengthened.

In July 1939, *al-Falaq* took the opportunity of a handover of the Ministry of Education to a new appointee and ran a series of three articles under the title "Education and its Problems". They were written as introductory notes to the major

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[101] The Iraqi government granted three annual scholarships a few months later to students from Zanzibar. At first, the Iraqi government was willing to offer four seats in its learning institutions to Zanzibari students without funding but upon the request of Sulaymān al-Bārūnī, the number was reduced to three students with full funding. See Ibid., September 10, 1938: 1.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid. Al-Kīlānī apparently kept in touch with the editors of *al-Falaq* after his departure. In April 1939, he sent them a pamphlet containing information about an institute he headed in Damascus called *al-'ālam al-islāmī*. See Ibid., April 1,1939: 2.

shortcomings in the system and included recommendations to improve it. The first article begins by stating that

> the majority of the inhabitants of the Zanzibar Protectorate are Arabs and Africans taking on the characteristics of Arabs --nothing differentiating between them but a slight variety of color and facial characteristics. Arabs are known by their strong adherence to their manners, religion and language... and native Africans have adopted this same nature from Arabs. The first thing they care about is their religion and the language of Arabs that they consider the language of their religion, and the ethics of Arabs that they glorify as branches of high Islamic ethics. Here started the problems of education in Zanzibar."[104]

Those problems, as listed in the next issue of *al-Falaq*, resided in the deep gap between the administration's policies and Zanzibaris' demands. Unlike what the administration claimed, the editor stated, Arabs were interested in education as they thought of it as a religious duty but had a weak faith in an unproductive one.[105] The editor then proceeded to refute the Department of Education's report for the previous year listing the desire to learn the Qur'an, the objection to the use of Swahili as a language of instruction, and indifference toward non-religious education as the obstacles preventing Arabs and Swahilis from engaging in the educational system. In response, the editor suggested that the government should respect the religious feelings of the *umma* and take it upon itself to teach Zanzibaris the Qur'an by introducing it into the curriculum as a subject of study. The reason children were spending years studying the Qur'an (at the Qur'anic schools), he explained, was because the government was not teaching them proper Arabic. Had they been like Egyptian students who were taught Arabic in the first place, he added, they would have learned the Qur'an by themselves.[106] As for the objection to Swahili as a

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[104] Ibid., July 8, 1939: 1.
[105] Ibid., July 15, 1939: 1.
[106] Ibid.

language of instruction, the author asserted that it was not because they did not like the language but because it was not useful.

> Let the government tell us in which university in the world we will enroll and be instructed in the language we are learning here? We don't deny that this is the widely used language in this country... but it is not true that teaching this language is essential... This is a hidden policy to erase the Arabic language and all traces of Arabs from the country..."[107]

He also denied the allegation that Arabs did not try to preserve their language and that they did not understand it. He stated that 90% of the Arab youth knew Arabic the same way an English man would know his language and that Arabs would like to preserve their language. However, he wondered how "they could do so while the administration of the Ministry of Education is in the hands of people who do not want to see a trace of the Arabic language?"[108]

In the third part of the sequel entitled 'Education and its Problems', he summarized the 'severe pains' that had alienated Arabs and Africans from education. Some of those pains were the distortion of the Swahili language (in reference to the use of the Roman script instead of Arabic), the moral neglect of Arabic and the exclusion of Islam, its ethics, language and history from the curriculum. "Those schools," he said, "were originally established for nationals and every nation learns its language, ethics and history and the history of its heroes."[109] Among the heroes he listed were Sa'īd bin Sultān, the founder of the Zanzibari Sultanate, *Mwenyi Mkuu*, identified by him as 'the savior king',[110] Nāṣir al-Rawāḥī (al-Bahlānī) and Tippu Tip. He strongly objected to the fact that European history and not that of Zanzibar had

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[107] Ibid., 2.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., July 22, 1939: 1.
[110] Ibid. That was a title held by local leaders on the island.

been taught in schools. "Does the government think," he added, "that there is no humanity in us and that we do not like to honor our blood and our fathers? They teach us the history of Europe. Fine! It is knowledge but where is our history? Were not our great men equal to others?"[111]

Yet Arabs believed the educational system was designed not only to marginalize them and disfigure their identity but also to keep Zanzibar firmly in the grip of the British. There was, according to al-Lamkī, a direct link between the policies pursued in education and the *raison d'être* behind European officials taking administrative positions inside Zanzibar.

> I know I am in a country ruled by another foreign colonizing country. Of course, in the language of colonialism, the colonized should benefit but does the dictionary of colonialism mean that the colonization of Zanzibar is the death of its people out of starvation and the control of its departments, small and big, by foreigners? … The excuse for their presence [in the departments] is that we are not educated. But who is responsible? Us or our government that opened for the people the doors of schools twenty four years ago, teaching them nothing but how to be servants for others?.. We demand institutes with higher education that graduate doctors, independent employees paid from our money kept with the government, institutes that graduate expert agriculturalists, technical engineers, judges and others whom the nation and the government need… Let them educate us. We are not asking for a free education… Ignorance is better than this education… As for the wise and the notables of the two islands, advise them that we had enough talks about clove, coconut, and meals. Life is about more important issues…"[112]

Those Arab 'notables' regularly criticized by *al-Falaq* for their lack of interest in anything beyond the clove tree and material profit were accused of paying no attention to issues perceived by *al-Falaq* as being more critical and more urgent. They were considered to be as responsible for the poor state of education and of the Arab community as the British were. This opinion was even more strongly voiced by Hāshil

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[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., May 21,1938: 2.

al-Maskarī who best summarized the poor state of education, of Arabs and of Arabism in his answers to a list of fifteen questions addressed to the editor of al-Falaq on 29 January, 1938. Hāshil, and not the editor Muḥammad al-Barwānī, provided the answers the following month. Some of them are:

> Q. How much education is there in Zanzibar?
> A. Education is very minimal. The student leaves school with no knowledge (neither in Arabic nor in English) that would prepare him for the future. It is possible that the policy of those in control dictate this outcome, in addition to the fact that the total negligence of the parents is making it worse
> Q. Do you have any religious or political leaders?
> A. Leadership *per se* is non-existent, neither religious nor political. Leadership is restricted to wearing embroidered cloth, red turbans, decorations and shiny medals on the chests, accepting official invitations and attending parties. That is it.
> Q. What is the general Arab spirit and sentiment?
> A. Arab spirit and sentiment may have an effect among Arabs in rural areas. As for us, urban, we have neither a pure Arab spirit nor a live sentiment.
> Q. Is the nation educated?
> A. The majority of the nation are not educated, especially us, Arabs. We have no scientific schools and no social clubs to educate the youth. Those who feel this is necessary cannot do anything, and those who can do something don't want to. Thus, foreigners are ahead of us in everything in this country and have obtained, at the expense of countrymen, government jobs and have enjoyed the amenity of this country.
> Q. Is there an Arab-Islamic spirit on the island?
> A. We may have some kind of the Arab-Islamic spirit or…
> Q. Do you have rich notables who donate for good causes?
> A. We have rich notables but we have seen no benefit for Arabs from this notability and this fortune.
> Q. Is there enough religious education in the country?
> A. Institutes for religious education do not exist and no one is interested in this art
> Q. Are there Arabic schools for Arabs?
> A. No. And we have constantly asked those who can afford it to build a school for Arabs. We have raised our voices and the angels of heavens and the inhabitants of Earth are witnesses on this. God hasn't ordained anyone for this mission yet.
> Q. Is the Arab Association for Arabs, and if so, do all Arabs follow its rules?
> A. The Arab Association represents Omani Arabs only but it defends the interests of all Arabs and the *ahālī* as well. There are some among Arabs represented by the Association who do not follow its rules and that is because they are stupid and ignorant about its importance.

Q. What language does the Association use in its correspondence with the government?
A. In English and rarely in Arabic[113]

Al-Maskarī's answers were molded with bitterness at one level and irony at another.[114] He was mourning what he saw as an unsatisfactory state of Arabs in Zanzibar and mourning the loss of Arab leadership, of Arabic, and of religious zeal. He, like al-Lamkī, represented a generation of Omanis who were either born or raised in Zanzibar and who, despite the fact that they belonged to a class of landowning Arabs, were becoming increasingly critical of that class, questioning its role and real influence in Zanzibari society. The influence of that class, as they repeatedly maintained, was not measured by wealth but by its capability to protect its identity and that of the *waṭan* (nation, *patrie*) Zanzibar, toward which this newer generation of Omanis promoted a sense of patriotism. According to *al-Falaq*, those who belonged to that *waṭan* were those who took Islam and Arabism –in full or in part (as was the case with the *ustu'rabu* phenomenon)—as markers of their identity and were those who fell victims to colonial educational policies marginalizing that identity. From that perspective, the concept of *waṭan,* at least in the 1930s, was inclusive of both Arabs and Swahilis[115] (or *ahālī)* whose religion and language were being deemed threatened by the British.

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[113] *Al-Falaq*, February 19 and February 26, 1938.
[114] Al-Maskarī was increasingly worried about the status of Arabs in Zanzibar. While still in Zanzibar, he once revealed to his son that he believed a day would come when they would need Oman. 'Abd Allah al-Maskarī. Interview, Muscat, March, 2002.
[115] It is worth noting here that few people in the 1930s were identifying themselves to census takers as 'Swahilis' because of the Public Lands Decree issued in 1921 that allowed 'native' or 'indigenous' Zanzibaris only to claim waste and unoccupied land. Swahilis were classified at the time as 'non-native' and thus, they identified themselves to employees of census projects as Hadimu, Pemba, Tumbatu or Shirazi. See Fair, *Pastimes and Politics,* 39. The fact, however, remains that a large number of Zanzibaris were known –outside census records— as Swahili.

Both terms *waṭan* and *umma* were used interchangeably to refer to Zanzibar although the term *umma* was used to designate both Zanzibar and/or the broader Muslim world. This variation in the scope of *umma* or *waṭan* was rooted in the Arab-Islamic ideology of the elite that grounded patriotism in the twentieth century discourses of Arabism and Islamism, which, in turn, defined the parameters of a Zanzibari identity. Thus, according to *al-Falaq* a Zanzibari identity bridged the divide between Arabs and Swahilis or between ex-slave and free, and was not determined by Zanzibari citizenship as crafted by the British in terms of political privileges for Arabs and Asians (and British) who were the only groups allowed representation on Zanzibar's Legislative Council. Commenting on the exclusion of Swahilis from political representation, Fair stated that "[t]hroughout most of the colonial era, Africans were defined as subjects of the sultan rather than as citizens of Zanzibar."[116] In fact, Arabs as well kept identifying themselves as subjects of the sultan and their reference to Africans and to themselves as such was an assertion of their loyalty to the symbol of the sultanate as an Arab-Islamic one. *Waṭaniyya* (patriotism) at the time was neither limited to nor defined by citizenship.

This patriotism delineated what may be coined as 'Zanzibari nationalism' and for whose birth Lofchie credited the Arabs in Zanzibar.[117] However, he attributed it to the post-war period and interpreted it in terms of a motivation that was "a complex blending of simple patriotism, a rather naïve, religiously inspired idealism, and a Machiavellian sense of enlightened self-interest."[118] It was the last part, he continued, that "stands out with particular clarity –the almost ominously uncertain political fate

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[116] Ibid., 42.
[117] Lofchie, *Zanzibar*, 128.
[118] Ibid.

of an alien aristocracy within a gradually democratizing constitutional framework."[119] First, the origins of 'Zanzibari nationalism' can be traced to the interwar period and more particularly to the late 1930s, and were rooted in the concept of *al-waṭaniyya* (patriotism) as defined by pan-Islamists and as embedded in the elite's discourse of Arab-Islamism.[120] It is not obvious what Lofchie implied by 'simple' patriotism, but the Omani intelligentsia defined patriotism from the beginning in terms of the broad interests of the Zanzibari society and in terms of a religious obligation to protect those interests. Patriotism, in their case, was a well-delineated concept and part of an elaborated discourse that had been defining the role and the meaning of patriotism within the parameters of loyalty to Arabism and to Islam and not to exclusivist territorialism of which pan-Arabists and pan-Islamists were highly critical.[121] Ḥasan al-Banna (d. 1949), founder of Muslim Brothers Society,[122] for example, and with whose ideas and career Zanzibaris were familiar, drew the line between the two versions of patriotism as follows:

> The point of contention between us and them is that we define the limits of patriotism in terms of creed, while they define it according to territorial borders and geographical boundaries. For every region in which there is a Muslim who says "there is no God but God, and Muhamed is his prophet" is a homeland for us… The advocates of patriotism alone are not like this, since nothing matters

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[119] Ibid., 130.

[120] According to al-Barwānī, one of the ardent supporters of patriotism in the 1930s was Muḥammad Sālim al-Barwānī who used to secretly write pamphlets with the title "Zanzibar for Zanzibaris". Interview. This expression is similar to the one that was popular in Egypt and read "Egypt for Egyptians".

[121] Interestingly, 'Ali Muḥsin al-Barwānī wanted to emphasize in his interview with the author that nationalism in Zanzibar was about patriotism and not about a certain Zanzibari *qawmiyya* (nationalism) per se. Interview, Muscat, March, 2002.

[122] See Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood* and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany: State University of New York, 1996), chapter III. Arabs in Zanzibar established in 1950 a newspaper called *al-Murshid* (the Guide), called after *al-Ikhwān*'s newspaper in Egypt. One of its most frequent contributors was Mas'ūd bin Muḥammad al-Riyāmī who, according to al-Barwānī, admired Ḥasan al-Banna and kept his beard like al-Banna's. Al-Barwānī. Interview. Muscat, Oman.

> to them except the affairs of that specific, narrowly delimited region of the earth.[123]

A similar approach had been adopted by Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khatīb, another strong advocate of Arab-Islamism whose newspaper *al-Fatḥ* was quoted regularly on the pages of *al-Falaq*. In his criticism of the exclusive territorial ideology of Egyptian nationalism, al-Khatīb affirmed that

> the Islamic countries are one country for all Muslims, and the Muslim has to be a soldier for this greater country wherever he goes. This is the correct meaning of patriotism that has always been perceived throughout Islamic history, and any other meaning is propaganda from the devil.[124]

Thus, Zanzibari 'patriotism' at the time was not a simplistic ideology and was not a reflection of a 'naïve' religious idealism but part and parcel of a finely constructed discourse on the significance and role of *patries* in the global *umma*.[125] For example, *al-Falaq* copied from the pan-Arab and pan-Islamic newspaper *al-Fatḥ* an article on patriotism that explained patriotism from Islam's point of view, which, as the article read, was an innate feeling toward one's own country and homeland. The Qur'an and the ḥadīth themselves, it continued, acknowledged and condoned such feelings that reflected people's natural attachment to their place of birth and/or upbringing.[126] Patriotism, *al-Falaq's* editor commented in another article, was a sacred duty. It was not an empty concept and it required sacrifice, honor, loyalty, honesty, and good deeds.[127] Moreover, "patriotism is benevolent projects and educational

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[123] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, 82.
[124] Ghazal, "Power, Arabism and Islam," 141.
[125] It is worth noting that the description of *al-Falaq* on the front page, at least until 1933, was that it was a 'social, political, and agricultural weekly'. In 1937, however, it had already added *waṭaniyya* (national) to the above description.
[126] *al-Falaq*, February 12, 1938: 2.
[127] Ibid., December 02, 1939: 1.

institutes; patriotism is institutions and hospitals; patriotism is taking over the economy and the trade... patriotism is to engage in different industries and private guilds..."[128]

Patriotism, in this context, implied independence and ability to be in control of the country's resources and policies. Arabs perceived their 'self-interest' through the interest of their country Zanzibar and in accordance with their duty to defend it and defend its Arab-Islamic identity. Thus, *Aflāṭūn* addressed "the call of the *waṭan*" to the Arab Association and to "those in whose veins runs the blood of Qaḥṭān and 'Adnān", and "in whose hands the *waṭan* cries: where is your Arabism? You bury it when others revive it..."[129] The duty of Arabs toward the *waṭan* was to save it from lack of proper education and from ignorance and to spend their money on the children of this *waṭan* to pursue prestigious education in the world.[130] *Al-Falaq* constantly reminded Arabs of their duties toward their *waṭan* and toward their *umma*. They were intertwined and a duty performed toward one was for the sake of both. This intertwining of patriotism and Islam, the *waṭan* and the *umma* was best articulated during a farewell ceremony in honor of al-Maskarī before he left for Oman for a visit. Al-Maskarī was described as someone who knew that "life is a continuous *jihād*, and that the individual in the *umma* is a soldier who should perform his duty to his *umma* and *waṭan* firmly, loyally and persistently."[131]

Hence Lofchie's 'Machiavellian sense' attributed to the Omani elite is based on the wrong assumption that Arabs perceived themselves as 'aliens', an assumption adopted and propagated by the historiography and not by Arabs themselves. Arabs

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[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid., June 4, 1938: 1.
[130] Ibid. Qaḥṭān and 'Adnān are names of Arab tribes.
[131] *Al-Falaq*, April 2, 1938: 2.

rather believed that they were an essential part of Zanzibar and that Zanzibar was part of their history, of their *umma*, and of their identity. Their patriotism was not a pre-conceived strategy to maintain 'hegemony' as it was clear for outspoken Omanis that that 'hegemony' had already been critically compromised and that they had already been marginalized. What they feared rather was a distortion of their own construction oi Zanzibari history as one belonging to Arabism and Islam and of their perception of Zanzibar as an Arab-Muslim entity. Thus, the Omani elite mobilized the discourse of 'Arab nationalism', to use Lofchie's words, not to preserve itself as an 'alien aristocracy' but to preserve its own identity and that of the island, to maintain Zanzibar's ties with the Arab world, and to arm itself with an anti-colonial ideology.

Zanzibar and Arab Unity

British educational policies were not seen in isolation from broader colonial schemes to keep the *umma*, the Arab-Muslim one, divided. The Omani elite saw its agony and struggle through the prism of the whole Arab-Muslim world and the road to salvation was in the unity of that world. Thus, any attempt to reassemble the *umma* was praised by *al-Falaq* and hailed as a sign of hope and of future relief from colonialism. For example, when Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Yemen joined in a triple alliance that was ratified in 1938, *al-Falaq* celebrated and called upon Syria and Egypt to join them.

> Each Arab has the right to celebrate it [the alliance] and to thank God for its ratification. Arabs everywhere should greet each other and pray for Egypt and Syria to join this alliance. This way, Arabs would have a quintuple alliance, united by the struggle to liberate Palestine, the Arab Emirates on the Persian Gulf, North Africa, Hadramaut and Zanzibar from the tyranny of the West and from European influence. It seeks to awaken Arabs in those countries and make them one force with one aim, which is to preach the word of God and force the world to acknowledge the greatness of Arabs.[132]

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[132] Ibid., February 5, 1938: 1.

Because the word of God, the author continued, would ultimately spread in Europe, Arab unity was inevitable; it was a precondition for the spread of Islam into Europe.[133]

Al-Falaq equated the plight of Zanzibar to that of each and every other Arab country under colonization whose independence would not be possible without the presence of a strong Arab alliance that would lead a liberation movement. United and liberated, Arabs would resume their original mission of spreading the word of God. Thus, Arab unity was the first priority and the pre-condition for any change or improvement in the Arab condition. The indispensability of Arab unity was a recurrent theme on the pages of *al-Falaq*, a theme discussed either by its editors and contributors or by other pan-Arab newspapers such as *al-Fatḥ*, the articles of whose editor, al-Khaṭīb, *al-Falaq* reprinted frequently.

One of al-Khaṭīb's articles appeared on *al-Falaq*'s front page and was entitled "One Country, One Nation, One Language". Al-Khaṭīb was analyzing the drive behind the union between Germany and Austria and was fascinated by the ability of Hitler to lead and accomplish that union despite Germany's financial burdens.[134] The German experience should be taken, he added, as an example of the possibility and feasibility of uniting a divided nation despite all shackles and hindrances that might appear to be preventing that unity. Al-Khaṭīb's introduction about the unity of the German-speaking people was to

> draw the attention of people of my nation --those speaking the language of the *ḍāḍ* (in reference to the Arabic language) in each country and under each star, spread everywhere from Western Asia to North Africa-- that faith is the secret of unity and its spirit and that unity is the fruit of faith and its aim… Arabs in

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[133] Ibid.

[134] Al-Khaṭīb was impressed by the German experience and by the leadership of Adolf Hitler. He hoped Arabs and Muslims would find a leader like Hitler who would unite and empower them. See Ghazal, "Power, Arabism and Islam," 136.

> Algeria or Palestine or Aden may not be able to realize their national dreams for lack of power... However, can Arabs in Algeria or Palestine or Aden claim that there is a force on earth able to prevent them from believing in their right [to unite]...?[135]

Reprinted articles on the pages of *al-Falaq* on issues pertaining to Arab or Islamic unity echoed the beliefs and ideology of *al-Falaq*'s editorial and all those in Zanzibar who held the same beliefs. They represented their own views, spoke their own language and shared similar hopes. Moreover, the same way the reputation of ibn Bādīs' *al-Shihāb* was "enhanced by reprinting the articles which Arslan wrote for *al-Fath* and other Eastern journals,"[136] the reputation of *al-Falaq* was also being enhanced by reprinting al-Khaṭīb's articles from *al-Fatḥ* and articles from other Eastern journals. *Al-Fatḥ* was without dispute the ideological pulpit for *al-Falaq*'s editors but *al-Falaq* was ready to welcome the establishment of any newspaper and journal promoting Arab unity and anti-colonialism, and from which it copied articles. For example, *al-Falaq* drew the attention of its readers to a new Iraqi journal, *al-Kifāḥ*, which "is guided by Islam, fighting western colonialism and working for the advancement of Arabs and Muslims..."[137] Similarly, it praised two Algerian newspapers, hoping they would work for uniting Arabs there, defend their rights and "eliminate the nightmare of colonialism."[138]

The concern of *al-Falaq* about Arab unity was best expressed in its reaction to the death of King Ghāzī of Iraq, a death seen by the editors as a calamity for Iraq and the Arab nation and feared to affect that unity from materializing:

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[135] *Al-Falaq*, April 23, 1938: 1-2.
[136] Cleveland, *Islam against the West*, 105.
[137] *Al-Falaq*, January 22, 1938: 3.
[138] Ibid., February 12, 1938: 3.

> The whole Arab nation is mourning. His death was devastating to the hopes of Iraqis but also catastrophic for the dreams of seventy million Arabs and Arabized between Basra to the East, Marrakech to the West, Aleppo to the North and Zanzibar to the South. The hopes were for the agreement and union of all Arab nations.[139]

In reality, *al-Falaq* was not mourning Ghāzī himself who was not known for his charismatic personality, his leadership skills, political ambitions, and was considered a puppet overshadowed by Iraqi officials. It was rather concerned about the hopes placed on Iraq as the beacon of Arabism and Arab nationalism and its potential role in uniting the Arab world. Iraq at the time occupied a special place in the minds and hearts of Arabs, being the first Arab country (with the exception of Tripolitania between 1918 and 1920) to gain independence and being a leading outspoken in favor of pan-Arabism. "To many Arab nationalists in the 1920s and 1930s," Dawisha has commented, "Iraq seemed best equipped to fill the heroic role played by Prussia in uniting the German-speaking people into one unified German nation-state."[140] That the version of Arab nationalism adopted and propagated by Iraq's secular nationalist ideologues, such as al-Husri,[141] did not completely conform to Zanzibaris' view of Arab nationalism as part of pan-Islamism, mattered little to them in that context. *Al-Falaq*, simply, was identifying with the era and its rhetoric of both independence and unity. That rhetoric embodied a collective dream, and Iraq, for all intents and purposes, was expected to make that dream come true.

That dream, as one article in *al-Falaq* argued, was not unfeasible and Arabs were able to accomplish it because they possessed the necessary elements for unity: blood, language, traditions, in addition to a strong desire to unite.

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[139] Ibid., April 8, 1939: 2.
[140] Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism*, 75.
[141] See Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist*, and Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism*, chap. 3.

> From Iraq to the Taurus Mountains to the Sudan, they have the same origin, same history and same traditions, in addition to a same language to which most of them adhere. This nationalist awareness is present and the proof is the popular reaction and agitation to what is going on in Palestine, Marrakech, Egypt…[142]

History, language and traditions brought Arabs together and orchestrated their collective reaction to colonialism. They linked East Africa to the world of Arabism and Islam and thus, *al-Falaq* reminded its readers, on the occasion of the first Congress of Arabs in East Africa held in Nairobi in May 1939, for their responsibility toward the revival of Arabism and Islam in that part of the world. By reviving them they would honor "the blood shed by your predecessors for three centuries while defending East Africa against colonialism".[143] They should, however, be vigilant and remember Fayṣal's experience in Syria whereby his attempt to revive Arabism in Syria was countered by the "colonial will to kill the young spirit [of Arabs] before it grows."[144]

Time and again, *al-Falaq* pulled Zanzibar into the heart of Arab-Islamic history and into the heart of Arab anti-colonial struggle, and time and again *al-Falaq* invoked past scenes of 'Arab heroism' to venerate Zanzibar's membership in that world. For example, in July 1939, an article was published commemorating the nineteenth anniversary of the famous battle of Maysalūn, when Yūsuf al-'Aẓm tried to defend Damascus against advancing French troops.

> Dear Reader,
> Today, while you hold this newspaper in your hands, and you look at its contents with your eyes, is the 19Th anniversary of revolutions led by Arab freedom fighters…

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[142] *Al-Falaq*, April 9, 1938: 2.
[143] Ibid., May 6, 1939: 1.
[144] Ibid.

> Because you are an Arab, Maysalun is an Arab tragedy, *al-Falaq* is an Arab newspaper, and because I am an Arab, I should tell you about Maysalun and its tragedy that fell on all Arabs…[145]

The long journey that separated Damascus from Zanzibar and the years that had gone by between 1921 and 1939 could not render Maysalun meaningless to *al-Falaq*'s readers. Distance and time were shortened by a collective history that was recreated and reconstructed to project a collective identity and a collective tragedy brought by colonialism. Maysalun was a memory to be shared and a tragedy to be commemorated by all Arabs, including those in Zanzibar. This collectivity could also be seen as a power to reckon on and thus, *al-Falaq* was prompted to warn Europeans on the eve of World War II that it was time Europe realized that the era of enslaving Arabs was over. "It was time Europe realized," *al-Falaq* announced, "that each Arab or Muslim looked askance at it because of its harsh and inhuman treatment of the descendants of the Arabian Peninsula".[146] *Al-Falaq* drew the attention of its readers to all the agitation and protest taking place in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula as signs of Arab rejection of enslavement. Al-Maskarī in his turn also called upon all Arabs to decide their fate by themselves and not to trust any European country, whether it was an enemy or claimed to be a friend.

> They [Arabs] shouldn't trust any promise in the future after they had seen the results of previous ones. They desire nothing but to live freely in their own countries like others do… Beware Arabs and Muslims of European propaganda broadcasted daily. It is all colonial deception… Move ahead Arabs and defend your rights and your countries.[147]

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[145] Ibid., July 22, 1939: 3.
[146] Ibid., April 8, 1939: 1.
[147] Ibid, May 27, 1939: 3.

Europeans were driven by their greed, he added, and their inter-rivalry was only for the sake of executing their schemes to control Arabs and Muslims. If anyone was in doubt, al-Maskarī pointed to French policy in Syria and British policy in Palestine. "The best proof is what the French authority is doing in Syria in terms of savage acts and what the British authority is doing to Palestinians."[148]

Palestine and the Palestinians loomed large in the consciousness of Arabs in Zanzibar as they did in the whole Arab world in the 1930s. Palestine was *the* Arab issue without rival and one that galvanized and emboldened all discourses of Arab unity and of anti-colonialism. In the words of one author, "the one issue that consistently found an echo among the urban, educated Arabic-speaking populations of the Middle East was the increasing danger of Jewish immigration into Palestine. Here was a concern that would unite the Arab nationalist, the Islamist, and the believer in Greater Syria..."[149]

The echo reached Zanzibar whose Omani elite was marching to the beat of the Arab world and was as much concerned about Palestine as all other Arabs and Muslims were. The Arab revolt in Palestine (1936-1939) forced cooperation not only between Arabs but also among Arab governments and highlighted the plight of Palestinians as that of "Arab brothers" battling colonialism.[150] Their plight met with extensive coverage on the pages of *al-Falaq* that reported incessantly between 1938 and 1939 on events, activities, and news related to the Palestinian issue.[151] It reprinted articles from other journals, published statements and announcements by a number of

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[148] Ibid.
[149] Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism*, 108.
[150] *Ibid.*, 75-106.
[151] For example, *al-Falaq* used to publish all reports and statements made by the Arab Higher Committee.

Arab associations dedicated to help the Palestinians and offered news analysis of what the Palestinian situation implied for Palestinians and for Arabs. Abū al-Barakāt (a pseudonym for al-Lamkī), for example, commented that the reason Britain was handing Palestine over to the Jews was because it did not want two Arab governments formed on the borders of the Suez Canal. England knew "who Arabs were and it recognized through King Fayṣal and other Arab politicians such as Zaghlūl to what degree an Arab can tolerate to be ruled [by colonials]... Britain knows very well that an alliance with Arabs can be trusted as long as the Arab government is weak."[152]

Another frequent contributor to *al-Falaq*, 'Alī Muḥammad al-Jamālī, used vivid descriptions of the agony and suffering of "our brothers, the Arabs of Palestine"[153] to arouse the feelings of Zanzibaris gathered during Palestine Day on June 4, 1938. The event was organized by the Young Men's Muslim Association that had established the Rescue Committee for Muslims in Palestine.[154] *Al-Falaq* covered the whole event and published the speech delivered by al-Jamālī who highlighted the significance of Palestine in Islam and in Islamic history, urged Zanzibaris to donate money for Palestinians and reminded the audience that the Palestinian cause was not an Arab cause only but a Muslim one as well.[155] The event was attended by Arabs, Swahilis and Indians and consisted of speeches in Arabic and Swahili as well as calls to collect money for Palestinians.[156] It was this bond between Zanzibar and the Arab world and the mutual recognition that each was part of the other that prompted the

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[152] *Al-Falaq*, May 21, 1938: 2.
[153] Ibid., February 12, 1938: 3.
[154] The name of the association must have been borrowed from the YMMA in Egypt with al-Khaṭīb being one of its founders.
[155] Ibid., June 4, 1938: 3-4.
[156] Ibid.

executive committee of the Syro-Palestinian Congress to commission its General Secretary As'ad Dāghir[157] to send a letter in April 1937 to Zanzibar, addressed to Sulaymān al-Lamkī. Al-Lamkī had already died in 1935 but the letter reached the Arab Association and contained a request for al-Lamkī, as one of the most renowned Arab notables of East Africa, to petition the British and show them that "all Arabs and Muslims genuinely support the people of Palestine and support their national acts..."[158]

Little could al-Lamkī or others in Zanzibar do for the Congress or for Palestine in petitioning the British. Yet it was this sense of solidarity and collective action that offered comfort to all Arabs and Muslims – the sense that from Western Asia to North Africa and down to East Africa it was one community sharing the same predicament and sharing its burden as well. Carrying the weight of that burden was a task Arabs in Zanzibar were glad to do. It reaffirmed their collective identity as much as it confirmed their membership in that community and their belonging to its history, present and future.

Zanzibar, the *waṭan*, belonged to that large community as well. Preserving that membership in the Arab-Muslim world necessitated conservation of the Arabic language and firm knowledge of the Islamic religion among all Zanzibaris. The Omani elite's identity was blended with that of the island and with that of all those who shared their concerns about British policies marginalizing Arabic and Islam. However, the Omani elite sought an additional path to help it maintain its identity and that of its

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[157] Dāghir, of Syrian origin, moved to Egypt and held editorial positions in both *al-Muqattam* and *al-Ahrām*. He was the editor of 'Arab affairs' in the latter, which was an attractive magnet for Mashriqis and known at the time for its pan-Arab orientation.

[158] *Al-Falaq*, May 21, 1938: 3.

waṭan. That was unity with the Arab world in its struggle for reform and for liberation from colonialism, a struggle the Omani elite had joined in the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

When Najīb al-Rayyis invoked the legacy of Andalusia to lament the loss of Zanzibar, he in reality invoked what he considered a tragic end of another episode in Arab-Muslim history -- an episode parallel to the Andalusian one. The comparison was legitimate, in his and others' eyes,[1] insofar as both represented the rise and fall of an Arab-Muslim rule beyond the Arab hinterland, each at a different time and at a different place. The fact that Zanzibar has remained after 1964 overwhelmingly Muslim and has retained many of its Arabic characteristics brought him some comfort. However, it accentuated his bitterness as it reminded him that, once upon a time, Zanzibar belonged to an Arab-Muslim dynasty and was ruled by Arabs themselves.

In some respects, the comparison between Zanzibar and Andalusia may be an overstated and an overstretched one but this 'Andalusian fever' in the case of Zanzibar is not without some validity. Like Andalusia, Zanzibar fell within the realm of an Arab-Muslim rule that ended violently. Those who executed that end did not, however, claim to bring Zanzibar back to Christendom. They rather laid claim to the 'Africanness' of Zanzibar, an indication of the deeper racial parochialization from which Zanzibari society suffered after World War II. This 'Africanness' versus 'Arabness' dichotomy took several dimensions: proletariat versus elite, mainlanders versus islanders and Marxism versus Islam.[2] Amidst all this, one reality had been

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[1] Many Zanzibaris in Oman hold the same view about Zanzibar being another Andalusia Arabs and Muslims lost.

[2] A. M. Babu, leader of the Umma party that led the 'revolution' against Arabs in 1964, analyzed the events in terms of class struggle. See idem. "The 1964 Revolution: Lumpen or Vanguard?" *Zanzibar under Colonial Rule,* 220-247. Lofchie described them in terms of Arab nationalism versus African nationalism, Marxism versus Islam and mainland Africans versus local Zanzibaris. For more elaboration on the mainland versus island dichotomy, see Jonathon Glassman, "Sorting out the Tribes: the Creation of Racial Identities in Colonial Zanzibar's Newspaper Wars." *Journal of African History* 41(2000): 395-428.

taking shape: 'Africanness' had become a rigid 'racial' identity conditioned by skin-color and ancestry and promoted as an ideology opposing 'Arabness'.[3] What African nationalists came to believe and utter in the post World War II era, many historians have projected to encompass the whole history of the Arab dynasty in Zanzibar. In the logic of African nationalists, Africans were from Africa and Arabs were from Arabia; Arabs in Africa were not 'indigenous' and their claim to be 'Zanzibaris' was not a legitimate one.[4] This logic, as we have seen in chapter five, is in sharp contrast with Arab Omanis' definition of themselves as 'Zanzibaris'. For them, Arabism and Islam belonged to 'Africa' as much as they did to 'Arabia'. Indeed, Arabism and Islam linked Africa to Arabia and beyond.

Zanzibar, for many Omanis, was a *waṭan* that was not defined by color and ancestry but by religion and language and the legacy those bestowed upon it. It was their *waṭan* by virtue of its Arabism and Islamism; a *waṭan* constructed on the premise that its members bore allegiance to Arabism and Islam, if to varying degrees. This Arab-Islamic identity of Zanzibar was reflected through the prism of Omanis' own identity -- also shaped and defined by their language and their religion. Such an identity entitled Zanzibar to be a member of the Arab-Muslim *umma*. The Omani elite invested in that membership which guaranteed its members contribution to as well as benefit from the causes promoted by the *umma* – renaissance and unity being the most prominent and urgent ones.

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[3] The following episode recounted by 'Ali Muhsin al-Barwānī summarizes the antagonism held against Arabs and against what they represented in Zanzibar. "After the overthrow of our government," al-Barwānī states, "Karume accompanied by his thugs marched in triumph to go and bury all the valuable Arabic type-setting equipment of the Government Press. No longer did they need anything in Arabic. The teaching of Arabic and Islam was banned." al-Barwānī, *Conflict and Harmony*, 87.

[4] Ibid.

Their role in those movements was delineated by political and intellectual currents prevalent in the Arab world and making inroads in Zanzibar. Omanis on the island positioned themselves within pan-Ibadism, pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism and Islamic reformism. They were affiliated to a broad spectrum of networks and communities which debated and shaped a collective Arab-Muslim identity and which adopted a common religio-political discourse. Islam, Ibadism and Arabism were the parameters of that discourse; Oman, the Maghrib and the Mashriq with their ulama, thinkers and writers were partners in outlining and articulating those parameters. That intellectual interaction among the various regions corresponded with increasing rapprochement between Sunni and Ibadi Islam since the late nineteenth century. Borders separating them were increasingly blurred. Each had become part of the other; each was reinforced by the other. Common Islamness and loyalty to Arabness rallied them to face colonialism and its various challenges.

Colonialism spurred Islamic reform and renewal, urged discourses of Arab and Islamic unity and created more diasporas within the Arab world. Islam stimulated its own innate dynamics of *tajdīd*, of a collective identity defined by the universality of the *umma*, and of its ulama and lay persons' networks, in order to counter that common experience. This observation about Islam's reaction to colonialism is not aimed at denying interaction or 'hybridity' between Islam and colonialism but rather to assert that Islam negotiated its relationship with colonialism by relying on and generating its own inner dynamics. A globalist approach dotting the scope of ideas and concepts grounded in Islam and tracing the networks of those who promulgated them

reveals the breadth and depth of those dynamics. It uncovers the reaction of the colonized from a standpoint of its own traditions and its own inner power.

This reaction is determined by an ideology and a set of values that create a bond of 'common Islamness' capable, under certain circumstances, of transcending sectarian differences and geographical boundaries. Sectarian differences tend to offer compromises when the *umma* and its faith are endangered. Geographic boundaries -- as constructed by colonial policies and adopted by nation-states -- are resilient in front of ideas and ideologies that permeate them. Diasporas render those boundaries even more resilient and function as continuous links capable of maintaining and sustaining ties between and among the different Muslim communities. What bonds all those communities together is an identity of global dimension to which all Muslims could subscribe. The Omani elite in Zanzibar was no exception.

The process of unfolding the identity of the Omani elite reveals detailed aspects of the above mentioned trends as they applied to modern Arab history. Weaving the threads between Zanzibar, Oman, the Maghrib and the Mashriq uncovers the depth of the interconnectedness between modern Ibadi history and general intellectual developments in modern Arab and Muslim thought, between Ibadi communities and Sunni ones, especially Salafi reformers. This observation is peculiar insofar as it reveals the formative impact colonialism had on the process of creating alliances between these two unlikely partners, Ibadis and Sunnis. This alliance took the shape not only of an Ibadi-Sunni one, but equally significant, of a Berber-Arab one, as was the case with Ibadis from North Africa such as Ibrāhīm Aṭfiyyash and Sulaymān al-Bārūnī.

Arabism, whether a cultural *nahḍa* conceived as an essential thread of the fabric of Islam or a political discourse of unity, appealed to non-Arab reformers as much as it did to Arab reformers. The fact that Arabism was embedded in Islamic reform and unity as a means to an end qualified it to be part of a collective Islamic identity. It succeeded in transcending a pure ethnic definition and in promoting itself as a necessary element of Islam to which non-Arabs could bear allegiance as well.

That process also highlights the role diasporas within the Arab world played in maintaining a sense of unity for a world perceived, in the collective imagination at least, as a cohesive and undivided one. From their base in the Mashriq, the Ibadi diaspora linked their home countries with their host ones through their publications, mainly the press, which channeled intellectual currents between the two parts of the Arab world. This was most obvious in the case of diasporic Ibadis who were integrated into the Salafi reform movement in Egypt. They also linked different Ibadi communities with each other as al-Bārūnī in Oman and Aṭfiyyash in Egypt did. Consequently, Ibadi reformers played a significant role in shaping modern Islamic thought and modern Arab history insofar as the Arab literary renaissance and discourses of Islamic reform and unity were essential trademarks of that thought and that history. Whether al-Sālimī, Aṭfiyyash or al-Bahlānī, Abū Isḥāq, al-Bārūnī or al-Maskarī, each had contributed in his own way to propagating unity and revival and each had left his imprints during that collective momentum geared toward generating the prowess of the *umma*.

The pervasiveness of that collective identity and of those ties in the interwar period attests to Islam's continuous role in shaping that identity and the intellectual

and political discourse of the period. Islam retained its ability to cross borders and mold a global identity in face of more imposed boundaries and more exclusive identities. The pervasiveness of that ideology at the peripheries of the Arab world, such as Zanzibar, obliges us to reassess in an even more rigorous way the role of Islam as a political ideology and as a nexus of a collective identity during the interwar period. After all, Zanzibar, like the Mizab, was influenced by its ties and connections to the Arab heartland. Scrutinizing those ties -- as they linked different regions and their intellectual networks -- reveals the unremitting vigor of a collective Muslim identity and the persistence of Islamic ideology.

Thus, the Omani elite in Zanzibar, with its ties and networks, political discourse and intellectual orientation, is only a prism through which we see a larger and more nuanced picture of the Arab world as it straddled both the 'hinterland' and the African 'peripheries'. One of those peripheries, Zanzibar -- for what it represented, what it offered and what it endured as a result of its membership in that world and its Arab-Muslim identity-- warrants a well-recognized place in modern Arab-Islamic history, one that encompasses both Africa and the Middle East.[5] It attests to the continuous juncture and permanent overlap between African and Arab histories, between Africa and the Arab world.

This broad sketch of Islam, Arabism and colonialism and Zanzibar's role in them steers their historiography during al-Busa'īdīs' period into a different path from the one already paved by historians. Rather than reducing the task of analyzing the

[5] The collapse of Busa'īdī rule in Zanzibar in 1964 and the annexation of Zanzibar to Tanganyika rendered it difficult for Zanzibar to maintain that membership. This, however, does not mean that there are no members of that society who still consider Zanzibar part of that world and aspire to promote Zanzibar as being as such.

history of Islam into a phenomenological study of 'Islamization', 'expansion' and 'penetration' this study resituates Islam in Zanzibar into a broader ideological context. It transcends 'conversion' as the dominant theme and the Sufi Order as the exclusive 'agency' of Islam in Zanzibar and East Africa. For one thing, to be an Ibadi -- as was the case with the Omani elite -- implied networks of connections that diverged, to a large extent, from those developed by Sufis. For quite another, those same networks and ties set Ibadis on a course of history that, though it converged with Sufis on some issues, took another path. That path was not only different from Sufis' but was more in tune with that taken by their opponents, the Salafis.[6]

The Salafi response to and interaction with the reality of colonialism differed significantly from that of Sufis. More particularly, the Salafis created an overwhelming impulse of Islamic reform and a powerful discourse of unity that allowed for concrete inter-sectarian alliances. So strong and assertive was that impulse and so engaging the discourse that it resulted in Ibadis converging with mainstream Islam. Those specific networks linking Ibadis in Zanzibar with Salafis in the Arab world did not pass through the Indian Ocean Corridor,[7] which so far has enlarged the scale of Sufi Islam in East Africa but has not disclosed other ties of identity in the region. Those networks rather stretch through the Mashriq, the Maghrib and Oman.

By resituating Zanzibar's ties as they had been developed by its ruling elite, we can make two observations that can challenge the historiography of Islam and al-Ḥusa'īdīs. First, the engagement of Ibadis in Zanzibar in the larger reform movements

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[6] For more information on the Sufi-Salafi debate, see Commins, *Islamic Reform*, and Ghazal, "Sufism, *Ijtihād* and Modernity."

[7] Beatrice Nicolini. "The Western Indian Ocean as Cultural Corridor: Makran, Oman and Zanzibar through the Nineteenth Century European Accounts and Reports." *MESA Bulletin* 37, no. 1 (2003): 20-49.

in Oman, the Maghrib or the Mashriq and their patronage of some leading figures in those movements defies their usual portrayal as members of a politically conservative elite that failed to respond to colonial challenges. This study has rather resituated the elite's relationship to and reaction to colonialism within a context of ideological resistance. Islam, Ibadism and Arabism as political discourses were the ideologies behind that resistance.

Second, it leads us to question the prevalent notions of 'formalization' of Islam on the East African coast and the ensuing 'Arabization' as being, first, developments that sharpened the Arab/non-Arab divide and second, as being phenomena unrelated to developments in the Muslim world in general. Lapidus, for example, observed that "[…] since the eighteenth century there has been a tendency for universalistic Islam to become more standardized."[8] A characteristic of that standard Islam was the "increasingly global Muslim identity,"[9] he added. What aided the development of that global identity was the wide spread of its literate tradition and a greater literacy in Arabic. In other words, the 'formalization' of Islam was not unique to East Africa but was rather part of a universal transformation in the Muslim tradition, a transformation to which non-Arabs in Zanzibar equally contributed.[10]

Thus, non-Arabs, namely Swahilis, were also subject to the global dynamics of Islam as they developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and their Swahili identity, largely defined by Islam, was part of that global Muslim identity.

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[8] Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 867.
[9] Ibid.
[10] See Pouwels' discussion of the role of *waungwana*, Swahili townspeople, in the learning of Islam's literate tradition at the turn of the century. Idem, *Horn and Crescent*,

Swahilis were "partly Arab, partly local and fully Muslim."[11] As such, the common ground between them and Omanis (and other Arabs as well) is yet to be charted.

In 1958 'Alī Muḥsin al-Barwānī, president of Zanzibar National Party, the party representing the majority of Arabs in Zanzibar, met with the Egyptian president Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir. On his way back to the island, Muḥsin received a hero, or rather a savior, welcome. "I was amazed," he stated, "to find the airport thronged with a multitude of people such as had never gathered before in our country."[12] "The car," he continued, "was pushed slowly by the enthusiastic crowd. The youths pushing and following were shouting in unison: "Bwana Ali!, Twataka Uhuru!" – "We want Freedom! We want Freedom!"

That the word "Freedom" was uttered in Swahili but was anticipated from a pan-Arab leader, namely Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir (Nasser), summarizes the deep and complex relationship between Zanzibar and the Arab world. Moreover, it provides a new venue to examine the impact of that relationship on Zanzibari society at large, including its non-Arab members.

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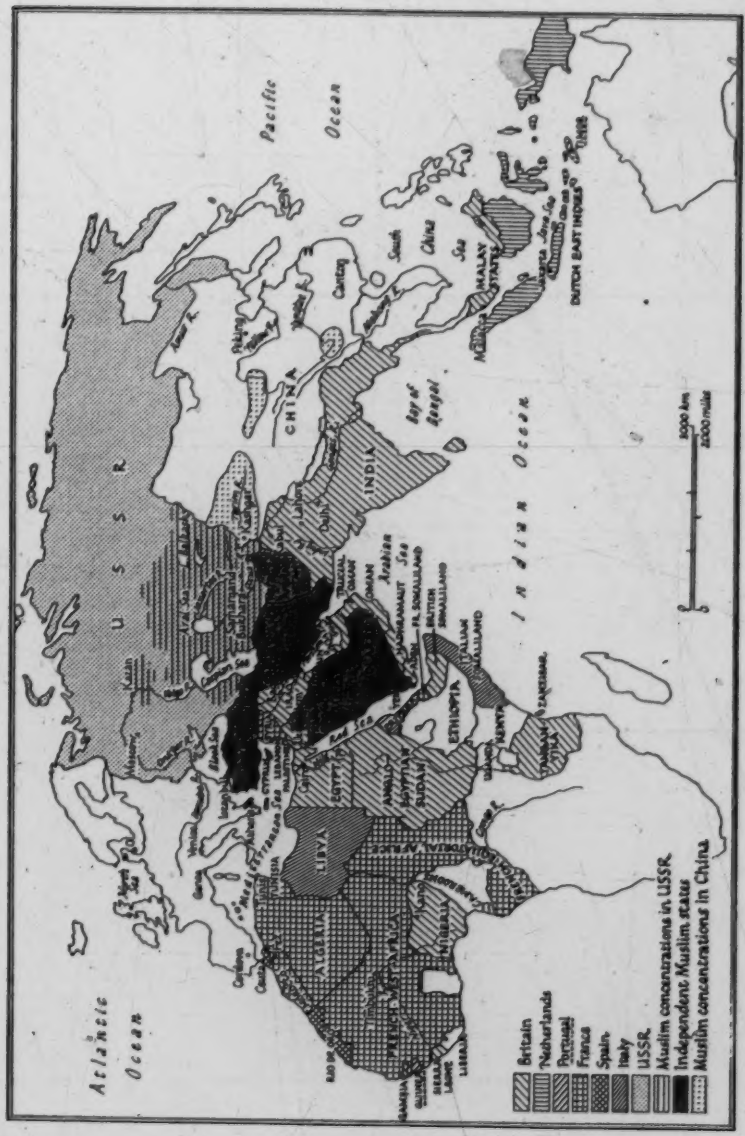
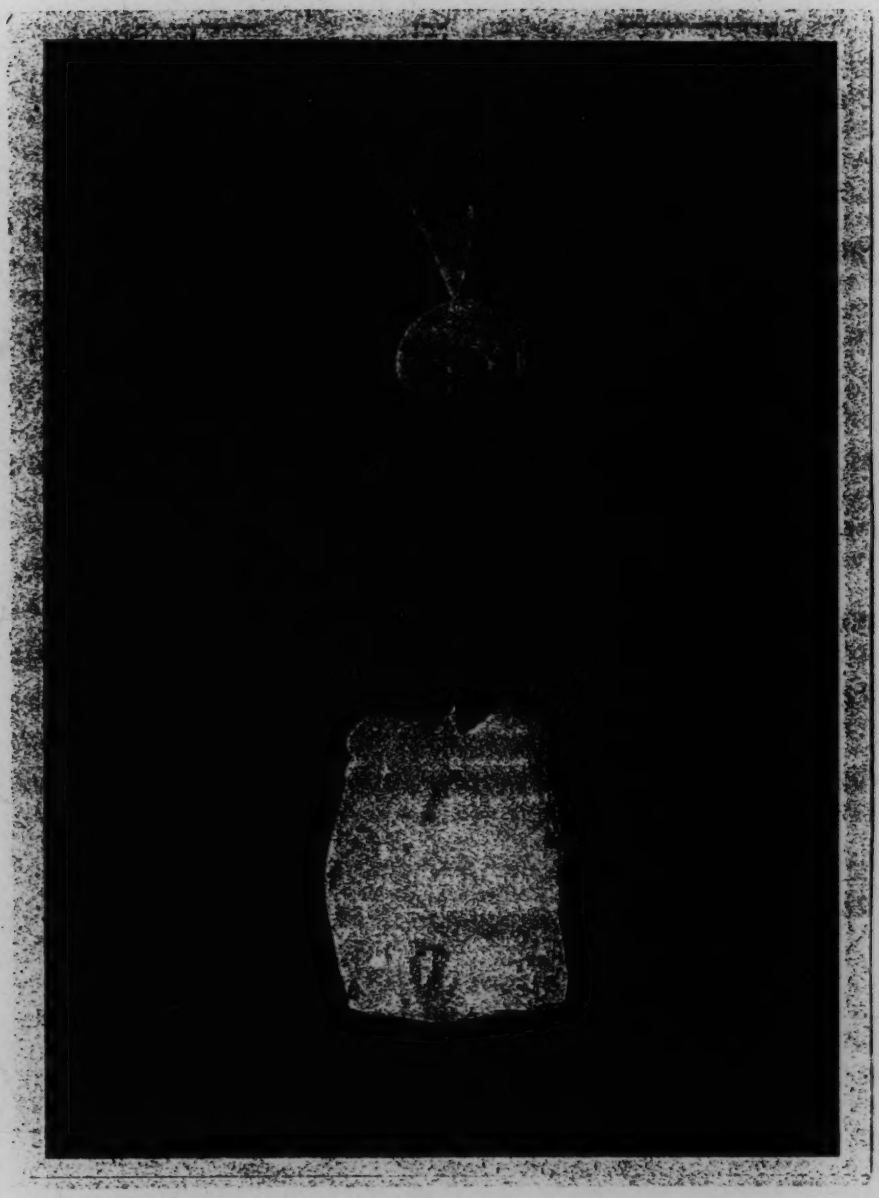
[11] Ho, "Empire Through Diasporic Eyes," 215.
[12] Barwani, *Conflicts and Harmony*, 106.



Map European Domination and the Muslim World: c. 1920

"Reprinted with the Permission of Cambridge University Press"



Hāshil al-Maskarī, seated

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Appendix A

'Alī Muḥsin al-Barwānī (March 27, 2002. Muscat, Oman): renowned journalist, one of Zanzibar's most prominent politicians in the post World War II era, member of Zanzibar's Legislative Council and Executive Council in the 1950s, Minister of Education, Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of External Affairs and main ideologue for Zanzibar National Party.

Sa'īd bin Muḥammad al-Riyāmī: (March 19, April 19 and 21, 2002, Muscat, Oman): well-acquainted with Zanzibari history and an acquaintance of a few intellectuals I refer to in my thesis. His credibility as a source was highlighted by the son of Muhammad al-Lamkī –the latter being a regular columnist for *al-Falaq* and one year chief editor-- who referred to Mr. Sa'īd as a more knowledgeable person even on al-Lamkī's history. Mr. Sa'īd's education in Egypt, his familiarity with its history and his Ibadi affiliation helped him understand the larger world and the broad picture in which I was interested.

Dr. Ibrāhīm Soghayrūn: (April, 2002. Sultan Qābūs University, Muscat, Oman): professor of history at the Department of History, Sultan Qābūs University, Muscat, Oman. Dr. Soghayrūn specializes in the history of Islam in East Africa.

Āsiā al-Bū'Alī (April, 2000): professor of Arabic at Sultan Qabūs University, a relative of al-Lamkī family.

Al-Maskarī, 'Abd Allah. Muscat, Oman, March 15, 2002: son of Hāshil bin Rāshid al-Maskarī.

Al-Riyāmī, Sālim bin Mas'ūd. Muscat, Oman, March 23, 2002.

Glossary

ʿālim (pl. ulama): a learned man, a scholar in Islam's legal sciences.
al-jāmi'a al-islāmiyya: Islamic Union, a term frequently used by Muslim reformers at the turn of the century.
al-nahrawān: a place in southern Iraq, east of the Tigris river. It was the site where the fourth Caliph, ʿAlī, defeated the *khawārij* in July 658.
dār al-ḥarb: the land of war, territory not subject to Islamic rule and Islamic law.
dār al-islām: the land of Islam, territory under Islamic law and rule.
fatwa: an informed opinion on a matter pertaining to Islamic law.
ibāḍiyya: The Ibadi sect, named after ʿAbd Allah ibn Ibāḍ.
ijtihād: reasoning free from received opinions; exerting oneself to interpret the Islamic law.
imām: a religious leader, usually the person who leads Muslims in prayer. In Ibadi terminology, he is the leader of the Ibadi community.
Jabābira: tyrants; unjust Ibadi rulers.
khawārij: literally dissenters. It is the group of Muslims who split from the army of the fourth Caliph ʿAlī, refusing the principle of arbitration between the Caliph and his rival Muʿāwiya.
madhhab: a school of law in Islam or a sect.
muftī: the Muslim scholar who issues a *fatwa.*
mujaddid: The person who leads a renewal movement in Islam.
nahḍa: resurgence, renaissance. In Ibadi history, it designates the revival and renewal movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
Salafiyya: from *salaf*, ancestors, in reference to the Muslim community at the time of Prophet Muḥammad and the first four Caliphs. It designates an early twentieth century reform movement in Islam.
sharīʿa: literally a path, a way. It refers to Islam's divine laws.
tajdīd: renewal in faith and religious tenets.
umma: the universal community of Muslims, the Islamic nation
waṭan: homeland, home country.